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The theological works of
William Van Mildert, D.D.,

Revd. William Tennant

14. April. 1840

From his sincere friend

Revd. John Jennings

6 Vols

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WILLIAM VAN MILDERT, D. D.

Late Lord Bishop of Durham.

THE

THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM VAN MILDERT, D. D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

SERMONS AND CHARGES,

WITH

A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

OXFORD,

PRINTED BY S. COLLINGWOOD, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY,

FOR JOHN HENRY PARKER;

AND J. G. AND F. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD,

AND WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON.

MDCCCXXXVIII.

SERMONS

ON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS,

AND

CHARGES,

BY

WILLIAM VAN MILDERT, D. D.

LATE BISHOP OF DURHAM.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR

BY

CORNELIUS IVES, M. A.

RECTOR OF BRADDEN.

OXFORD,

PRINTED BY S. COLLINGWOOD, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY,

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AND SOLD BY J. G. AND F. RIVINGTON, LONDON.

MDCCCXXXVIII.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

In order adequately to describe the life and character of a person so eminent as the late Bishop of Durham, his biographer should be one of almost a like spirit and elevation: he should have been nearly his contemporary and associate, and be somewhat resembling him in dignity and power of mind. The writer of the following Memoir is painfully sensible to his want of these necessary qualifications. Having always felt himself comparatively young in years, and been prevented by remoteness of situation, and a retiring disposition, from enjoying many opportunities of converse with his revered Relative, or with other public men, he cannot but feel an incompetency to the honourable office which he has undertaken, and would gladly have left it for an abler hand. In consequence, however, of a strong appeal, and an assurance that probably no one else could be induced to undertake the work, he has thought it incumbent on him to attempt it. Whatever the result may be, certain it is that the reputation of the deceased Prelate depends not on the unworthy efforts of *his* pen: although dead, he yet speaketh for himself, both by his writings, and by works of piety and generosity, which will probably endure, and perpetuate a grateful remembrance of him, even to the years of many generations.

Most of the writings which follow this Memoir have already been separately published. A few Sermons are added, which the Author had selected and marked, during

his life-time, towards preparing another volume for the press. It is trusted, that, though perhaps less accurately finished than if he had been spared further to revise them, they will be found full of sound religion and piety, and in no respect unworthy of their Author, or injurious to his high literary reputation.

MEMOIR

OF THE AUTHOR.

William Van Mildert was born of parents in the middle class of society. His name denotes him to have been of Dutch extraction. The family of Van Mildert or Meldert was originally from a town so called in Dutch Brabant. Nothing more, however, is remotely known of it, than that one of the name was a statuary, a native of Antwerp, and appears to have executed, at nearly the beginning of the 17th century, some pieces of architectural sculpture in and about the great church of Notre Dame, at that place. The great grandfather of the late Bishop was Daniel, son of David Van Mildert of Amsterdam. He was naturalized in England probably in the reign of William the Third, and lived at Homerton, near Hackney, as a gentleman; tradition says, in rather a splendid style. He had a fine collection of natural curiosities, which went into the possession of Sir Hans Sloane, and is now in the British Museum. His son Abraham Van Mildert, born December 1680, married December 1709 Ann Wittenoom, daughter of Dirck Cornelius Wittenoom, a Dutch merchant settled in London. He also was a merchant, living first in Thames street, then in Great St. Helen's, where he died.

His issue were eleven children, most of whom died young, and unmarried. Only three of the sons are known to have reached man's estate, and of them, two, namely, Daniel and Dirck, left no male offspring. The third, whose name was Cornelius, married Martha, only daughter of William Hill, esq. of Vauxhall; by whom he had six daughters, and three sons, namely, Cornelius, (who died in the 11th year of his age,) Dirck, (who died in infancy,) and WILLIAM. Of the daughters, Martha, the eldest, was married to the late Rev. Thomas Etherington, of Stockwell, Surry; and Ann, the second, to Cornelius Ives, esq. of Bradden house, Northamptonshire: both these have lately died, leaving children: the others died early in life, except the youngest, who still survives, the last, it is supposed, of the name in England. The residence, during forty-four years, of Cornelius Van Mildert, and the birthplace, accordingly, of his children, was in Blackman street, where he carried on the business of a distiller. He began with no more than about three hundred pounds, and acquired only a respectable competency. His health was weak, his habits rather contemplative than active, and his temper remarkably placid and unambitious. Hence, although he obtained the esteem of all who knew him, as a man highly moral and religious, he never formed an extensive or lucrative connexion; and having retired, perhaps sooner than he had proposed, on account of some new excise regulations, which he knew not how conscientiously to observe, he removed to Newington place, where he died, A.D. 1799, in the 79th

year of his age: his widow survived him more than nineteen years.

In Blackman street, then, William Van Mildert, the third son of Cornelius and Martha Van Mildert, was born, on the 6th of November, 1765; and on the 8th of the following month he was baptized by the celebrated Dr. Samuel Horsley, afterwards bishop of St. Asaph, who was rector of Newington parish at that time.

When about eight years of age, he was put to school. The first school worthy of notice which received him, was that of St. Saviour's, then kept by a Mr. Jennings, under whose tuition he soon began to shew himself a boy of no mean ability. It is related of him, by one who was his associate at this period, that on returning home after school hours, he invariably took the first time to prepare his tasks, with a view afterwards to amuse himself the more freely, and that, by the combined quickness and perfectness which he displayed, he innocently deceived both his parents and his master; the former being led to suppose him superficial and inattentive; the latter, to imagine him remarkably diligent, and intent on learning. While at this school, he gained an honorary medal, which is still preserved. On one side of it is a head of Queen Elizabeth, with an inscription that the school was founded in her reign, 1562; on the other side is an elevation of the building, surrounded with the words "Sigillum hoc "puero optimè merenti detur;" and on a shield underneath is engraved "Gul. Van Mildert, ætat. XI. "MDCCLXXVI."

Notwithstanding his promising advancement in classical learning, the subject of this memoir was hitherto designed by his father for no higher station in life than that of a London tradesman. Accordingly, when he was about thirteen years old, it was proposed, on his own choice, to bind him apprentice to a chemist, in which line his talents and scholastic acquirements might have found some profitable scope; and a friend of the family, Mr. Calverley, a most worthy man, and an intimate companion of the late Wm. Stevens, esq., was applied to, on the subject of receiving him. But Mr. Calverley at once refused, as intending soon to retire from business: upon which the future Bishop appeared to have been influenced solely by his affection for that excellent person; since, when informed of his refusal, he desired that no other situation of the kind should be sought for, and at once avowed an inclination to pursue his studies, with a view to become a clergyman. This may justly be reckoned a critical period of his life; and Dr. Horsley, the rector of the parish, whom his father thought fit to consult, is said to have expressed an unfavourable opinion, or to have remonstrated against "diverting the boy from trade." However, the wishes of the young aspirant were happily acceded to, and he was transplanted to a higher school. Westminster and St. Paul's were both considered to be ineligible, because at both the pupils were peremptorily required to attend, disregarding inclemency of weather, and from a child he had been liable to inflammation in the eyes, if exposed to cold or rain. The Merchant

Tailors' school was therefore preferred, and to that he was removed, probably in his fourteenth year. The Rev. Thomas Green was at that time head-master; but the Rev. Samuel Bishop, who was then under-master, soon after succeeded to his place. Mr. Bishop was a very estimable man, and ranked high as a sound and an elegant scholar. Nor did his new pupil fail to shew a congenial mind, and proportionably to gain upon his affection. Specially did he excel in English exercises, both prose and verse, some of which are still extant in manuscript, and perhaps in print. Nevertheless, having been entered at too late an age, he was superannuated. No moral fault, nor any defect of learning, was imputed to him; but he was too far advanced in years to wait for an opportunity of going off on a fellowship to St. John's, Oxford, which, both by himself and his friends, was much desired.

Consequently, Queen's college in that University, was his destination. He was entered there February 21, 1783, in the nineteenth year of his age; Dr. Fothergill being at that time provost, and Dr. Collinson, who succeeded him, holding the more immediately important office of tutor. Respecting Dr. Collinson, the Bishop always spoke in terms of affectionate esteem, and, were he still surviving, he might furnish some interesting recollections of his pupil. As the case is, a friend informs the writer, that they who knew him in college have been heard to say, that he was of regular and studious habits, and from the first applied himself more particularly to theology; and at the same time, a contemporary

and acquaintance at another college, remembers to have always considered him a pleasant and gentlemanly companion, fond of music, and not very studious. These apparently conflicting statements may easily be explained and reconciled. Taken together, they denote the subject of them to have possessed a remarkably vigorous elasticity and cheerfulness, as well as a depth and solidity of mind, which, they who knew him best in his future course, will most readily testify to have been the fact. He could happily prosecute his studies, and lay a good foundation, without secluding himself, or ceasing to enjoy society. Indeed, there are other traditions and evidences that, at this period, he was fond of the elegancies of social life, and had a taste for polite accomplishments. Besides music, drawing and poetry were his recreations; in both which he seems to have been respectable as an amateur. And, since it is certain that he did not so turn aside after these, as to dissipate and enervate his faculties, or contract a distaste for more important objects, his friends may well consider it no discredit, but the contrary, that he could take pleasure in them. One who can thus moderately divert himself in his youth, is usually better adapted than the severe and painful student, to profit mankind with his graver learning in after years. It may be suspected that a voluntary estrangement from elegant amusements and literature, betokens quite as often a narrow or overburdened, as a really superior understanding. While a schoolboy, and during his vacations from Oxford, he held much intercourse with Mr. Percy, a nephew

of the late Bishop of Dromore, who died at an early age. He was also acquainted with Mr., afterwards Serjeant Pell, and other young men of considerable talent, and literary promise. One of these, destined for the law, is said, about this period, to have bespoken for himself the Lord-chancellorship, for his friend "Van Mildert" the Archbishopric of Canterbury: the former part of this prediction entirely failed, the latter has been well nigh accomplished.

The future Bishop of Durham took the degree of B. A. Nov. 23, 1787, and that of M. A. July 17, 1790. The examinations previous to degrees were not then of a public or discriminating kind; it is impossible, therefore, now to discover how he acquitted himself, or what were his relative attainments. No doubt, however, he had made a becoming proficiency both in classical and other learning; and certain it is, that his general conduct and disposition had been such as to win the cordial and lasting approbation of his superiors. This appears by a letter to him from his late tutor, dated 1793, at which period he was still an undistinguished curate; and the following sentences are so highly creditable both to the writer, and the person addressed, that they may here with much propriety be inserted:

"It was not without concern that I received "Mr. ——'s directions to take your name out of "our books: and I now feel even more regret on "this account, from the consideration, that he had "not clearly understood your meaning. Perhaps it "is not of much consequence; yet whatever seems "to separate us from those whom we have reason

"to esteem, becomes an addition to the evils of life. "The regard you express for the college is very "pleasing. I trust the college will ever be ambi-"tious to gain the favourable opinion of those of its "members, whose conduct reflects on it the greatest "credit. The candid and liberal manner in which "you formerly accepted my endeavours to do my "duty towards you, then deserved my best acknow-"ledgments; and the kindness with which you now "speak of me, affords me the truest satisfaction. I "request you to accept my sincere thanks on both "accounts, and to be assured that I shall rejoice "very cordially in hearing of your health and wel-"fare, and in every opportunity of shewing you "that I am, and still continue to be, with real re-"gard and esteem, my dear sir, your very affection-"ate friend,

SEPTIMUS COLLINSON."

"The Provost and the members of the common-"room desire me to present their best respects."

In Trinity term, 1788, William Van Mildert was ordained deacon, by the Bishop of Oxford, upon the curacies of Sherborne and Lewknor, near Watlington, which he served from Oxford: but this his first engagement was of short continuance, and no particulars respecting it are known. In the following year, he was admitted into priest's orders, and took the curacies of New Church and Bonnington, in Kent; his residence being at Ashford, an inconvenient distance. That town, however, was then the abode of many of the clergy, who had parochial duty in the neighbourhood, and thus contained within

itself a society, of a kind more intellectual and satisfactory than is commonly to be found in provincial places; insomuch that, could he have set aside higher considerations, the situation might have seemed a fit one to be retained. But he was unable thence to hold sufficient intercourse with his parishioners, for the purpose of enlightening their minds, and stimulating his own to exertion, in the way of ministerial duty. Feeling which, and apprehending, in consequence, a decrease, rather than an increase, according to his years, of spiritual and mental energy, he resolved again to change his place and sphere. This, within a short time, he happily procured means to do. Through the recommendation of Dr. Finch, then prebendary of Westminster, who was a friend of his father, and of Archdeacon Ratcliffe, who had examined him for orders, he became, in the year 1790, curate to Mr. Downes of Witham.

A more fortunate—be it rather said, a more providential—change, or one more entirely in agreement with his wishes, could hardly, it appears, have been obtained by him. Mr. Downes was himself generally resident, and superintending, only not equal to the laborious parts of his duty. He had, accordingly, the advantage, always much to be desired by a young clergyman, of his superior's daily counsel and guidance, and that superior, a truly valuable man, possessing at once an excellent piety and discretion. Of this advantage he gladly availed himself, in the prosecution of both his studies and parochial ministrations. Here, also, he enjoyed the privilege of frequently visiting at the house of Mr.

Kynaston, and of assisting him in the conduct, if not in the institution, of a Sunday school, a mode of doing good which was then comparatively recent. Altogether, therefore, the Bishop ever afterwards justly regarded his engagement at Witham as one of the most beneficial turns in his life. He always considered his character to have then mainly received the impulse and direction, which qualified him for his subsequent elevation, and never ceased to speak of the friends of his youth in that place, with sentiments of gratitude and esteem. The state of Mr. Downes' health being such as to render the exertion of preaching unsafe for him, the customary two sermons of course devolved upon his curate, and he began with preparing original compositions every week. His vicar, however, considerately advised him to abate somewhat of so arduous an undertaking; thinking it likely, not to improve, but to exhaust his mind, and prevent him from advancing in theological knowledge. This advice was undoubtedly sound, and was subsequently, often repeated with approbation, by him to whom it was given. Writing, many years after, to a young clergyman, who had consulted him on the subject, he says, "With respect to the com-
"position of sermons, I know by experience how
"difficult it is to be satisfied with one's own pro-
"ductions. This I suppose is the case of most
"clergymen who endeavour to go on improving.
"But I would by no means advise you to be scru-
"pulous in *always* preaching original sermons. It
"is an useful and improving exercise to abridge or
"compile from the most approved authors, especially

"from some of our older divines; and you may se-
"lect from the Homilies of our church materials for
"useful popular discourses, divesting them of their
"quaintness of style, and of any peculiarities adapted
"only to the times in which they were written.
"These resources, however, are only to be consi-
"dered as subsidiary to original composition, not to
"supersede it; for compositions of your own, whe-
"ther inferior, or not, to others, will always have a
"sort of zest for the preacher, as well as the hearer,
"which is not to be found in mere transcripts, or
"compilations."

During his engagement at Witham, in the summer of 1792, he appears, in company with five others, whose names are not mentioned, to have visited parts of Holland and Belgium. Of this tour there has been found amongst his papers, a short unfinished journal; but it contains nothing which could now be interesting. However, the fact is here mentioned: and it may seem right farther to state in this place, as characteristic of a mind generally active and unembarrassed, that the natural scenery and aspect of the country in various parts of England, through which the Bishop had to pass, either on business or recreation, were often pleasantly described by his pen.

In the spring of 1795, the Subject of this memoir obtained his first benefice in the church, being presented by his brother-in-law, Mr. Ives, to the rectory of Bradden in Northamptonshire. The value of this rectory was then considerably under two hundred pounds a year, and there was need to build

on it almost a new house, at an expense of nearly a thousand pounds. Nevertheless, seeing only an uncertain prospect of any thing more eligible being offered to him, he set about to establish himself at Bradden. Having procured a temporary habitation in the neighbourhood, he married, in the autumn of the above-named year, Jane, the youngest daughter of General Douglas, with whom he had become acquainted at Witham, and took leave of his friends in that place, not without a feeling on both sides of sincere regret. But his incumbency of Bradden was destined to be a short one, insomuch that he left unfinished the building which, at a large cost, he had begun. In the next year, the living of St. Mary Le Bow became vacant, and, the turn of presentation being with the Grocers' Company, it was procured for him by his maternal uncle, Mr. Hill. Upon this he instantly vacated Bradden, after having held it only long enough to expend in building probably about five times as much as he had received in tithe. To that place, however, and its inhabitants, he ever afterwards apparently considered himself a debtor. Such a removal, though it may seem to have followed almost too speedily, was certainly, on the whole, to be desired. No doubt, he would have approved himself an excellent shepherd of the few sheep in a country village; and there is abundant evidence that he accepted the situation as his permanent lot in life: yet, even there, his habits, and acquirements, and tone of mind were denoting him fit to occupy a more conspicuous post, and to move in a higher sphere.

Mr. Van Mildert was instituted to his new benefice, St. Mary Le Bow, Cheapside, in the month of October, 1796. There being no house upon it fit to inhabit, he at the first took up his residence in Charles street, Manchester square; but at Lady-day of the ensuing year, having experienced much inconvenience during the winter on account of the distance from his parish, he removed to No. 14, Ely place, Holborn, where he continued until his election to Lincoln's Inn. From this comparatively convenient abode, he could open and maintain an uninterrupted communication with his parishioners; the result of which was, that there presently sprang up a mutual attachment between the most respectable and worthy of them, and their new Rector, warm enough, in several cases, to survive his many subsequent promotions.

It was not long after the present period that his father died, at an advanced age. This event occurred, as already stated, in the year 1799, at the latter end of the month of April, and appears to have been keenly felt by him. Other troubles, too, almost immediately supervened. By some incautious conduct, during his time of mourning, he brought on an eruptive fever, which incapacitated him, during many months, for clerical duty, and from the effects of which he never entirely recovered: in fact, the disease, on abating, became partly chronic, and obliged him frequently to resort to Harrogate for relief, throughout the course of his after life. And about the same time, A.D. 1800, he was assailed by a highly vexatious prosecution.

So far as the writer of this memoir can collect, the law respecting the non-residence of the clergy, had been suffered a long while to sleep, and the habit of taking out licenses had generally fallen into desuetude among those who were not residing, when an unprincipled informer came forward to take advantage of the omission, by attacking particularly the incumbents of the London parishes. Among these, the Rector of St. Mary Le Bow had become liable, and of course was not spared. The informer, being actuated by a mere desire of gain, had no regard to the evident reasons which, in *his* case, had made residence impracticable. Notwithstanding the undeniable fact, that of the three houses belonging to him as rector of the united parishes of St. Mary Le Bow, St. Pancras, and Allhallows, "not one "could be made a fit residence for the minister, "being all of very confined dimensions, detached "from each other, and incapable of enlargement, and "that they had never been inhabited by any former "incumbent since the fire of London, nor intended "to be so, the ground on which they were built "having been let upon building leases for forty "years and upward;" notwithstanding this reasonable plea, and the anxiety which, under such circumstances, he had shewn, to be, nevertheless, near the scene of his parochial duties, by engaging a house at a high rent, within a moderate distance, Mr. Van Mildert was one of the many, against whom an information was preferred. Nor did the above considerations avail upon his trial, except to preserve his character from censure; the law being peremptory when

appealed to, and such as might not on moral grounds be set aside. The case was decided in the month of December, at a time when the defendant was unavoidably detained in the country by ill health; and, in consequence, the following account of it was written to him, by the pen of his legal agent and adviser: "Your cause was tried this morning, and "lasted till two o'clock. I was present during the "whole of it; and as I know your anxiety to hear "the result, I have determined not to let the post "leave London without conveying to you the parti-"culars. I have bad and good news to communi-"cate; bad, because the verdict is against you; and "good, because that verdict is conditional; that is "to say, your counsel has raised an objection to the "declaration upon a point of law, which, if it be "valid, will give you the verdict; and I have the "satisfaction to add, that upon this objection Lord "Eldon is most decidedly in your favour. The "verdict against you is for all the penalties, amount-"ing to 110*l.* The objection we have taken is, that "the declaration states you to be beneficed with the "parsonage of the rectory and parish church of the "united parishes of St. Mary Le Bow, St. Pancras, "and Allhallows; whereas we contend, that you "ought to have been stated to be beneficed with the "rectory of St. Mary Le Bow, *with the rectories* of "St. Pancras and Allhallows; and of course that "you are beneficed with three rectories, and not "with one only. The Archbishop of Canterbury "had the goodness to attend, and, as the cause "stood first for this morning, he was at Guildhall

"before half past nine o'clock. His Grace bore very "honourable testimony to your character, and at a "previous interview, expressed himself well pleased "that he should have an opportunity of doing so. "As to the parishioners, they all attended. I wish "the jury had been composed of such men. Every "body seemed surprised at their giving so many "penalties, particularly, after an intimation from "Lord Eldon, that he hoped the consideration of "your case would induce the legislature to inter-"fere, and take these matters out of the hands of a "common informer." Likewise the Archbishop's registrar wrote thus by the same post: "I am truly "sorry to say, that at present the event (of the trial) "is unfavourable, the jury having found a verdict "for the whole of the penalties for eleven months; "but an exception having been taken to the indict-"ment, which will most probably produce a nonsuit, "their verdict will fall to the ground. It is his Grace's "particular charge to me, to desire you not to let "this matter affect your spirits in the smallest de-"gree; for from the very high, and deservedly high "character given of you by a very numerous and "respectable part of your parishioners, as well as by "your adversaries, his Grace is almost inclined to "think, that, even if the penalties were to be reco-"vered, you would have occasion to be pleased, that "such an opportunity had been given to purchase "fame at so easy a rate." Nothing, certainly, under the circumstances, could have been more honourable and consolatory than these communications, to which others of a similar nature might be added. Also,

upon the introduction of a bill, during the following session of Parliament, to prevent a repetition of such vexatious proceedings, a remarkable testimony was borne by the Lord Chancellor, in the House of Lords, to Mr. Van Mildert's worth, and in the House of Commons, he was equally well spoken of, on the same occasion. Nor is it to be omitted, as a substantial proof of good opinion, that when the exception above noticed was judged invalid, half of the penalties was defrayed by the Archbishop. To account for his taking so deep an interest in the matter, it may be proper here to subjoin, that St. Mary Le Bow is a Peculiar of the Archbishop's, and, accordingly, that the new Rector, soon after his appointment, had become regularly known to his Grace, and had dined on public days at his table. Notwithstanding, however, the Archbishop's generosity on this emergency, the remainder of the penalties, and still more perhaps the expenses of the trial, were for some time so heavily felt, as to render expedient a contracted mode of living.

Within a year or two of the present period, and probably aided by the celebrity which had befallen him, Mr. Van Mildert was elected into a society then lately instituted, and denominated "Nobody's "club," in honour of Wm. Stevens, esq. the late treasurer of Queen Ann's bounty, whose humility had induced him to prefix to his writings the title of *οὐδένος ἔργα*. The Hon. Mr. Justice Park, in his highly interesting Life of Mr. Stevens, has given a history of the institution of this club, which need not be here cited at length. Suffice it shortly to

state, that four barristers of such eminence as to be afterward elevated to the judicial bench, and, besides them, several highly respected laymen and clergymen, were among its earliest members. Mr. Van Mildert, though not one of the original body, was soon associated with it, to his no small mental gratification, not to say his future advantage in life. If there was any thing of which he might be called covetous, it was of admission to the best society, i. e. the most worthy in a religious and intellectual sense, of his day; and few were there better qualified to adorn it.

The Archbishop, whom we have seen taking so lively an interest in his affairs, and so graciously approving of his conduct, was Dr. Moore. To him he had applied, very soon after his settlement in London, for an appointment to a three years' term of preaching the lectures founded by the Hon. Robert Boyle. The rector of St. Mary Le Bow had usually obtained such an appointment, in consideration of the lectures being preached in his church; and the present Rector specially desired it, with a view to revive, or render profitable, an institution, which had ceased to attract the public notice: also, he stated, it would afford him an opportunity, which he had long wished for, of delivering a series of discourses upon the immediate subject of the lectures, (viz. "for proving the Christian religion "against notorious infidels,") which he conceived might be peculiarly useful in the existing times. These lectures, instituted about the end of the seventeenth century, were first preached by the cele-

brated Bentley, and had afterwards engaged the talents of some of the most eminent theologians of the English Church; amongst whom occur the undying names of Bishops Kidder and Gastrell, and Doctors Stanhope, Samuel Clarke, and Derham. Subsequently, however, they had much declined in reputation, and since the year 1780 none had been committed to the press. Under such circumstances it was, that Mr. Van Mildert sought the office, with the intention above described. Besides the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Frederick Cavendish appears to have been at that time the sole, or the sole influential, trustee; and he, on being applied to, with the Archbishop's sanction, declared himself pledged for the next turn to another, but that, at the end of three years, the present applicant, if then desirous, should succeed. This promise, having been given in writing, was satisfactory enough to preclude a fear of disappointment. The delay, therefore, may be reckoned an advantage, as affording time for mature thought and preparation; and by his own statement, the future Lecturer "then first worked "hard." Yet this, and all other like statements of men advancing from "strength to strength," must doubtless be taken in only a comparative sense. "Nil actum reputans dum quid superesset agen-"dum" is usually the principle of such men; or, more properly, that of the Apostle, "Forgetting "those things that are behind, and reaching forth "to those things that are before." The reports, accordingly, which, on special occasions, they make of themselves, disparaging their past conduct, are

not to be received without much allowance, with respect either to their intellectual, or to their moral and religious habits. Scarcely any, it may be presumed, have done excellent things, or attained unto eminence in wisdom, by a distinct effort, who have not previously, for years, (though perhaps almost unconsciously,) been laying a proper groundwork: and certain it is, by several tokens, that the subject of this memoir had always more or less been addicted to theological studies. Some time before, he had published a sermon on the liturgy; moreover, he aspired to the situation of Boylean lecturer, as having his mind already pregnant with a subject, which strongly denotes the prevailing bent of its contemplations.

The subject fixed upon by Mr. Van Mildert for his lectures, was "An Historical View of the rise and "progress of Infidelity, with a Refutation of its prin-"ciples and reasonings." In drawing out his plan, he appears originally to have been influenced by the consideration, that the lectures were to be delivered in three separate years. On a blank leaf in one of his books, there is in pencil, undoubtedly by his hand, what may be supposed the earliest sketch of them, arranged in three equal portions; according to which, the historical part was to be compressed into only eight lectures, and the arguments against infidelity, *a priori*, and *a posteriori*, were each to occupy eight likewise. Whatever may be thought of this arrangement, which is here stated as a literary curiosity, the Author's reasons for altering it appear not difficult to be discerned: he saw fit to

take a more extensive scope in tracing "the rise and "progress of infidelity;" and not only might he expect his *hearers* to be very few, but he might also remember that the longest interval between the lectures is not at the end, or commencement, of each year.

In July 1806, about a year and a half after the last of them was preached, these Lectures issued from the press, dedicated by permission to Archbishop Sutton, who had then lately succeeded the Lecturer's patron, Dr. Moore. This was the first important publication of Mr. Van Mildert, and it seems at once to have established his character, as a man of eminently sound principles and learning: it soon received the seal of public approval, and its reputation was confirmed by the highest authorities. The following testimonies from Dr. Porteus, then bishop of London, and Dr. Dampier, bishop of Rochester, must have been highly gratifying to the Author. The former prelate, after stating that he had delayed to write, until he could read the volumes which had been sent to him, "with the care and attention which they "deserved," proceeds — "I can now say that I "have perused your work with very great satisfac-"tion, and think it a masterly performance. You "have treated a most important subject with distin-"guished ability and learning. Your work is cal-"culated to do very essential service to the cause of "religion, as well as very great credit to yourself, "and will, I think, rank among the most celebrated "of those lectures, which Mr. Boyle's excellent insti-

"tution has been the means of producing to the "world. When I remove to London, I shall hope "to have the pleasure of seeing you, and of thank-"ing you in person for the gratification your book "has afforded me." The latter prelate writes more particularly thus: "I beg to return you my best "thanks, as well for your obliging present of your "Boyle's Lecture Sermons, as for the great pleasure "and information which the perusal of the first "volume has afforded me. You have no reason to "fear the opinion which all serious people will en-"tertain, of your publication of an important argu-"ment, which is so well arranged, and so regularly "deduced, and where such extensive learning, and "so many very acute observations are presented to "your readers, in a style peculiarly easy, and per-"spicuous. In other quarters, it may perhaps not "be so well received, and the less, on account of the "just position which you have insisted on through-"out, that the spiritual Enemy was active from the "beginning, and still continues to be so. Your "distinction between his operation, and the Evil "Principle of the old heretics, is sound and accu-"rate, and anticipates the only objection which can "be brought by those who wish to keep it out of "sight. I need not say that I shall enter on the "second volume with much eagerness, and a full "assurance that I shall not be disappointed in the "expectations which I have formed of it." The distinction thus referred to, and specially commended by Bishop Dampier, is drawn out in the twelfth lecture, at page 445 of the fourth edition, and is

indeed sufficiently clear to have prevented the imputation of Manicheism, which (as the Author seems to have expected) was brought against his "Histo-"rical View" by certain Socinian reviewers of the day. The difference between the scriptural representation of the Evil Spirit, which he had adhered to, and that of the heresy, which maintains the doctrine of an Evil Principle in the universe, coequal and coeval with God himself, is there declared in a manner not to be mistaken, except by persons who would deny the existence, under *any* conditions, of an Evil Spirit.

It is, no doubt, to be supposed, that the greater number of the persons by whom this memoir shall be taken up, have perused the above imperishable work. Yet even to them a short digest of its contents may seem not unacceptable, nor out of place; and some, perhaps many, of the remainder may thereby be induced to procure and read it. The Writer, accordingly, thinks fit here to insert such a digest from the able pen of Mr. Prebendary Townsend, in a sermon preached by him at Durham cathedral on the Sunday immediately following the Bishop's death. After justly stigmatising, as the great error of the age in which we live, the opinion that infidelity or unbelief may be supposed equally sincere with belief, and a conclusion of reason, and therefore to be held exempt from censure, Mr. Townsend thus proceeds: "Against this intolerable "evil, the book was written, of which I am speaking. "The proposition which the Bishop lays down, and "which he defends, and shews throughout to be

"right, is this—That infidelity in all its forms, from "paganism in the earlier times, to the philosophical, "metaphysical, sceptical unbelief of the present day, "is not unintentional error, but the wilful corrup- "tion of known truth, and therefore an undoubted "sin. He affirms and proves, that infidelity origin- "ated, not in the difficulty of discovering truth," (since God revealed it both to our first parents, and subsequently to others,) "but in the sin of the heart, "which denies truth; in the pride of the under- "standing, which confuses truth; or in the love of "evil in the life, which rejects and abhors truth. "He begins his noble work by demonstrating, that "infidelity takes its rise in these sources only, under "the power and influence of the evil Spirit, by whom "all sin and all evil was at first introduced into this "lower world. When man, under his influence, fell "from God, then the prophecy was uttered, which "has ever been fulfilled by infidelity alone, in its "various forms of apostasy—'I will put enmity "between thee and the woman, and between thy "seed and her seed:' it was predicted that there "should be carried on in the world, a constant war- "fare between truth and falsehood, good and evil, "vice and virtue, religion and irreligion; and that "this was to arise, not, as modern infidels tell us, "from unavoidable defects of the understanding, or "deficiency of evidence, but from enmity—from the "hatred that fallen man (naturally) bears to the "one true religion, which God would through many "ages gradually reveal, till it was at length com- "pleted." Thence the Author "goes on to prove

" from the whole History of Infidelity, beginning
" with the antediluvian world, through the pagan-
" ism, the heathenism, and the corrupt philosophy
" of the Gentiles before Christ, to the rise and pro-
" gress of Mahommedanism, Atheism, Deism, and
" various systems of error and false philosophy after
" Christ, down to our own age, that it continues in
" the world from the same causes. He confirms the
" justness of this statement, by pointing out the ful-
" ness of the evidence which demonstrates the truth
" of the religion of the Bible, together with the im-
" possibility that man could ever frame an (accept-
" able) religion for himself. He points out the utter
" insufficiency of the human understanding to do
" this, and the consequent necessity of the submis-
" sion of the understanding to the truths of Revela-
" tion, as a part of the moral probation of man.
" He reviews" (and places in a most convincing light) " the arguments" (from the extensive and consistent scheme of revealed religion) " from mira-
" cles, from prophecy, and from the inspiration of
" Scripture; and he concludes by shewing, that
" while his argument will not of course apply to
" those who never heard of the Gospel, it applies to
" all who live in a Christian country, and have re-
" ceived a common Christian education. There is
" no excuse (he maintains) for those who resist the
" evidences of Revelation, priding themselves on
" their infidelity and unbelief; and, consequently,
" that it is the duty of all to avoid the contamina-
" tion of false reasoning, 'to hold fast the profes-
" sion of our faith without wavering,' and also to

"vindicate it against 'the perverse disputings of "men of corrupt minds, whatever be the modern "notions of indifference to religion, or the danger-"ous liberality, which makes truth and falsehood of "equal authority, and of equal value.—Such is the "outline of the work, which will be esteemed by "the Student and the Christian, as long as truth is "regarded, or the English language spoken."

If any thing may be added to the foregoing by an inferior hand, the present writer begs to record, in a few sentences, his strong impression, that a book on the whole more worthy, both as to its plan and execution, has seldom, or never, been produced. The learning, which, without ostentation, is brought to bear on every department of the subject, and the energetic language which pervades it, are truly of a more than ordinary description. Once, indeed, (and perhaps oftener,) it has been represented by an unfriendly writer, as the work of a merely industrious compiler. The Author's reputation does not require that this should be absolutely contradicted. A compilation to a great extent it is. The first, i. e. the historical, part, were it entirely new, or invented, would be no better than a cunningly devised fable—a false accusation against the Evil One, and his disciples; and respecting the latter half, which is the Refutation, it might have been scarcely possible in the course of *that*, to adduce any solid arguments, which had not in *some* shape previously been alleged. Besides, there has rarely been known a mind less ambitious to strike out novelties, or more distrustful of them when urged

by others upon his notice, than that of the Author of these Lectures; and accordingly, in an Appendix, he has freely laid open his resources. But, while thus acknowledging them to be, generally, a compilation, his biographer may justly assert both the volumes to betoken a high degree of original intelligence and power. They are, from first to last, of a fresh and attractive, of an enlightened and discriminating character. The line taken in them, was, until then, unoccupied. Such a systematic exposure of infidelity, at once in its head and in its members, in its deeds and in its sophistries, had not before been designed and wrought out, within a convenient compass, in order to the common benefit. Moreover, the work is singularly adapted, in all its parts, to every educated class of readers, and is known to have extensively gained access to, and consideration with persons of various, and nearly opposite conditions. The tone of it is precisely that, which, without giving reasonable offence, denotes an Author fully master of his subject, and bold to handle it in the face of adversaries and scorners: it repels no one by a needless asperity, or uncharitableness, and still never fails to express a strongly decided, and an uncompromising temper. The style, likewise, is both excellent in itself, and remarkably suited to the matter; being pure, simple, and unaffected, yet nowhere deficient in elevation, and dignity. It seems to have flowed (as in fact it did flow) almost naturally, from a powerful and comprehensive understanding. Without an appearance of study, it renders the deepest topics comparatively

lucid, and the driest, interesting. Though clear, it is not cold; though grave and sober, it is not austere. The stream of it is generally uniform and equable, not often swelling into grandeur, nor exhibiting bursts of eloquence and passion, which are calculated rather to beget admiration, or an instant and transient excitement of feeling, than to work a permanent and salutary impression. Yet there are striking sentences enough to shew, that the Author wanted not a spirit to furnish more, had he thought fit thus to arrest the reader's mind; and, what is of higher value, in almost every paragraph may be perceived traces of a spiritual unction, or holy warmth at heart, imparting life to the whole course of the argument, and prevailing distinctly towards the close. Scarcely a sermon of the number, is concluded without an inference, or exhortation, or encouragement, intended directly for the edification of believers. Sometimes, as a leader of the Christian warfare, he cites an animating and appropriate passage, resembling the note of a trumpet, from the Psalms; at others, his suggestions are less of a stirring, than of a comforting, or admonitory, or persuasive cast; but rarely, if ever, does he omit, on discontinuing for the time his argument, to subjoin a sentence or two of a more animating, or pastoral character. And of these concluding counsels, as indeed of the entire work, the interest is greatly heightened by a recognition, specially preserved throughout, of the personality of the Evil Spirit. The reader is kept sensible, from first to last, that it is not chiefly flesh and blood which he has to wrestle against, nor an

imaginary abstract principle, but a mighty, though a fallen angel, ruling in the children of unbelief and disobedience, and prompting their ungodly words and deeds. This, no doubt, very much contributes to render the whole lively, and acceptable, as it is, to all except *his* servants whom it exposes; the doctrine being one, which, too seldom, perhaps, is distinctly advanced in these times, even by authors who have no intention to dissemble it. These Lectures, be it here stated, were so quickly appreciated by the public, that, in the year following their appearance, a second edition of them was called for, which was accordingly printed, with a valuable enlargement of the Appendix; and since that, a third, and a fourth have been demanded.

While on a journey, at some former period, through Kent, Mr. Van Mildert had been much struck by the pleasant appearance and situation of the village of Farningham, near Sevenoaks; and had expressed a desire, if so it might be, to obtain the vicarage, as an agreeable retreat, within a convenient distance from town. In the year succeeding the publication of his Lectures, it became vacant, and, the Archbishop of Canterbury being the patron, he resolved to venture upon applying for it. Nothing could have been more gratifying than the answer returned to his application: "I have great pleasure," the Archbishop wrote, "in complying with your re-
"quest: your claims upon me, public and private,
"are better founded than your modesty will suffer
"you to state." This was in March, 1807; in the month following, he was collated to the vicarage

of Farningham, having been previously appointed chaplain to the Duke of Queensbury.

Here, again, Mr. Van Mildert had to undergo much trouble and expense, in providing a tolerably commodious residence. The benefice was small in value, and the house in need of repair, and insufficient. He had, therefore, in a great measure to renew, or alter, in order to make it a comfortable habitation; and during the progress of the work, he found himself (as is frequently the case) obliged greatly to exceed his first design. So, for a while, his acquisition was both a costly and a vexatious one, and could afford him but little profit. Having, however, at length completed his building, he usually spent in it a considerable part of the summer and autumn months, enjoying the society of his respectable neighbours and parishioners. Also, he considered it not too far from London, for him occasionally to visit and minister there, at the less inviting seasons of the year. About this time, there appeared the first portion of a publication, which was afterwards extended to two volumes, entitled "The Churchman's Remem-"brancer," being a collection of scarce and valuable tracts, in defence of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England. Mr. Van Mildert may perhaps be said, without impropriety, to have been one of the Editors of this work, which was much wanted, and is one of sterling utility. Certain it is, that he took a lively interest both in the planning and superintendence of it, while it lasted, and that two of the prefaces, or introductions, were written by him, viz. that to "Playfere on the Seventeenth Article," and

that to "Norris on Conventicles." Nothing, indeed, could have been more congenial to his mind, than thus to reproduce, and commend to the notice of both the present and future generations, the almost forgotten wisdom of the preceding times. To this period, also, probably belongs an occurrence which the Bishop has been heard to mention more than once, with an expression of peculiar gratification. A young man of the class (it is believed) of gentlemen farmers, who was known to entertain infidel principles, seemed to have pleasure in his society and conversation. Observing this, with a view still more to win his regard, Mr. Van Mildert invited him to a trial of skill at chess, and afterward, took an opportunity of entering with him into a theological discussion. Having thus explored his capacity and turn of mind, and discovered him to be not obstinate nor depraved, he gave him to read, in order to convince him of the facts on which religion historically depends, Leslie's "Short Method with "the Deists," Paley's Evidences, and his own (then recently published) Boyle Lectures; the effect of which, in process of time, was a satisfactory conviction and conversion, with many warm expressions of gratitude to the person by whom, under God, he had been set right. Not a few, it may be hoped, are the infidels and sceptics who have been convinced by the able exposure of their principles, and the arguments for revealed religion, contained in the treatises, and specially in the lectures, which were then successful. The writer of this Memoir is acquainted with another, almost similar case within

his own very limited sphere. Because, however, man is not often allowed to see distinctly the fruit of his good endeavours, and "there is joy in heaven "over one sinner that repenteth," the above instance, which the Bishop is known to have thought much of, has here been stated. Also, his manner of beginning may be taken for an example that he could not only well develope (as he not long after did) in writing, St. Paul's habit of becoming "all things to "all men, that he might save some," but could, moreover, put it discreetly into practice.

During five years from his collation to Farningham, nothing more of public interest respecting the Subject of this memoir is to be met with; except that, in 1808, he offered himself a candidate for the preachership of Gray's Inn, and was unsuccessful. By the elevation of Dr. Jackson to the episcopal bench, in 1812, the pulpit of Lincoln's Inn became vacant, and Mr. Van Mildert, with other competitors, aspired to occupy it. This being esteemed an eminent post for the public exercise of talent, and an almost sure step to higher promotion, has generally been contended for with some avidity. In the present case, seven candidates were at first spoken of, among whom was Dr. Middleton, afterwards Bishop of Calcutta, then holding the vicarage of St. Pancras; but before the day of election the number was reduced to three, viz. Mr. Van Mildert, Archdeacon Nares, and Mr. Elmsley. Between the two former of these, who had previously been engaged in confidential intercourse with each other, a correspondence the most friendly and honourable to

both parties, on the subject of their rivalry, took place; in which it is stated by the Archdeacon, as his chief plea, that he had been assistant preacher to Dr. Jackson at Lincoln's Inn nearly sixteen years; a circumstance, confessedly, of no slight consideration. It was, however, insufficient to prevail against the high reputation of his competitor, who was chosen by a great majority of electors. Among these were Mr. Spencer Perceval, and others, who have since become ornaments of the judicial bench.

Within a month from the date of his election to the preachership, Mr. Van Mildert had to experience the shock of suddenly losing the eminent friend above mentioned. On the 12th of May, Mr. Perceval fell by the hand of an assassin. He had attended once in the chapel of Lincoln's Inn, and had begun to cultivate an acquaintance with the preacher, when his life was cut short in so fearful a manner. On this catastrophe Mr. Van Mildert delivered a sermon, befitting both his audience, and the excellent character of the deceased. The chapel was filled with persons, besides the benchers, not a few of high rank and consideration; and nothing could have been better adapted than the matter and style of his discourse to make a deep impression on their minds. Having been immediately published, it was extensively read; and having, not long since, been republished, it is too well known to require a particular description. From Isaiah lvii. 1. he remarks on the death of the righteous, when it appears to take place prematurely; and on the serious feelings and considerations, directly opposite to unconcern,

which it should awaken: then he confidently states the "righteous" one lately taken away to have been worthy, in a moral and religious point of view, of almost unqualified commendation: he declares him to have possessed the Christian graces of piety, benevolence, and self-control, as wrought by the Holy Spirit in his heart; and, after justly stigmatizing the murderer, he concludes with certain appropriate reflections and counsels. No one probably has perused this composition without being deeply moved by the tone of religious awe, and pure affection and regret, and dignified rebuke, and spiritual admonition, which pervades it. Yet more deeply must it have been felt by the hearers, coming to them, as it did, warm from the Author's heart, and with all the advantages of a suitable aspect, and enunciation. On such a topic one may probably imagine him to have excited a stronger interest than usual, or, as it were, to have surpassed himself. However, the ordinary manner of Mr. Van Mildert in the pulpit was highly interesting, and in accordance with his matter. Though calling to aid little or no gesture, and often experiencing much physical infirmity, he always spake as fully convinced of the truth and importance of his doctrine, and as being much in earnest to convince others likewise. His accents, the expression of his countenance, and his whole bearing, became authoritative, argumentative, or persuasive, in agreement with the nature of his subject; at the same time, he generally appeared to be rather refraining, than urging himself, and under the influence of a judicious mind, to be exhibiting

less emotion than he really felt. To shew the estimate formed by strangers of his preaching about this period, it may be allowable to close these remarks with an extract from a work entitled "The Pulpit," by Onesimus. After ascribing such a preference to the extemporaneous oratory of dissenters, as proves him to be certainly not a partial witness, Onesimus thinks fit to say as to the Subject of this Memoir, in the following year, when he had been farther promoted, and had proceeded to his Doctor's degree,—"Dr. Van Mildert, it must be owned, has "nothing of action; but his deportment exemplifies "all that solemnity of character which can alone "be said to dignify the preacher. Whenever he "ascends the pulpit, it is evidently for the religious "instruction of his hearers, and not to challenge "their applause, or admiration. He chiefly aims to "expound the word of God—never attempting to "be wise above that which is scripturally stated—"for the practical improvement of those around "him. Learned, reflecting, and judicious, he af-"firms nothing that he has not rigidly examined, "or respecting which he is not thoroughly satisfied. "His expositions are profound, yet not abstruse; "elaborate, yet not unintelligible: his arrangement "is natural and perspicuous; and his arguments "are solid and convincing. Nothing that savours "of intemperance, nothing crude, nothing of flourish "or of figure, is suffered to impair the substantial "fabric of his compositions. His voice consorts "with the nature of his preaching, being deep, "sonorous, and grave. His style is not homely,

" but studiously plain. He will doubtless fill the " high office of Regius Professor of Divinity with " credit to himself, and advantage to the students " of Oxford; and may not unreasonably look to " adorn that mitre, with which his professional ex- " ertions must eventually be recompensed."

In Easter term, 1813, Mr. Van Mildert was chosen by the Heads of Houses at Oxford, to preach the Bampton lectures in the ensuing year; and in the autumn, that higher and more valuable preferment which is mentioned in the foregoing extract, devolved on him. To Mr. Perceval there had succeeded, in the person of Lord Liverpool, a Prime Minister equally bent on advancing merit. Accordingly, in the month of September, Dr. Howley having been promoted to the see of London, on the demise of Dr. Randolph, the vacant divinity chair at Oxford, with the canonry of Christ Church and rectory of Ewelme annexed, was graciously offered to Mr. Van Mildert; and, after an inquiry into the nature and duties of an office which he had never thought of being called to occupy, was accepted by him. Many, and most heartfelt on this occasion, appear to have been the congratulations of his friends, and strong their expressions of satisfaction at so excellent a dispensation of ministerial patronage. Among these, two letters, on the same sheet, from two eminent barristers, then on circuit, who were shortly afterwards raised to the bench, must have been felt specially gratifying by the new Professor. The first, after noticing the intelligence of his appointment, proceeds, " I must say it is one of the most

"honourable ever made, and proves that the present "ministers are actuated by an earnest desire for the "welfare of this Church and nation." Then he adds, "But I write in a great hurry to entreat that "you will not resign Lincoln's Inn. You have "done, and are doing, so much good in that place, "that I beg you will not take such a step without "the fullest consideration. Unless your duties of "Regius Professor render your attendance in Lin-"coln's Inn impossible, I, for one, entreat you not to "resign, and three of your hearers, now in court, "join in my request." The second writer says, after expressing his heartfelt satisfaction, "I do "verily believe that our present rulers are really "anxious to appoint the fittest men to the highest "stations; for which I highly honour them. Do "not abandon Lincoln's Inn, where you may be "assured you are doing incalculable good, without "full consideration." Much more, too, of the same kind, from other distinguished persons, is at hand, to prove, that no one more acceptable at once to the Church, and University, and the public at large, could have been fixed upon by Lord Liverpool, for the situation.

In consequence of the above solicitations, which his Sermons, since published, strongly demonstrate to have been prompted by something better than an indiscriminating friendship, or partiality, Mr. Van Mildert, who almost immediately became D. D., having resigned the vicarage of Farningham, determined to continue a time longer at Lincoln's Inn. Thus he had pressing upon him at once, besides the

cares, and ceremonies, and hospitalities, inseparable from a new and eminent situation, the arduous duties of providing discourses for that learned audience in London, and of preparing the Bampton lectures, and divinity lectures at Oxford. Very few persons could have supported such a burden; and he on whom it now fell, was frequently heard to express a painful sense of its distracting and complicated nature. Nevertheless, he persevered, and by tasking to the uttermost his powers of mind, was able to keep on until the termination of his Bampton lectures, by which, of course, he felt considerably relieved. These having been duly preached in 1814, were published in the commencement of the following year, and are presenting themselves at this point to be observed.

The subject chosen by the Lecturer was, "An "inquiry into the general principles of Scripture-"interpretation." By way of vindicating such his choice, he says, in his opening lecture, "If any one "period more than another may render a discussion "of this kind necessary, does it not seem to be when "there prevails, as in the present moment, an ex-"traordinary zeal for the dissemination of the Scrip-"tures; a zeal, which, however pure and laudable "in itself, appears to call for a correspondent care "to guard against the perversion, to which even "that best gift of God is liable?" and presently afterward, he thus lays down his plan—"It is pro-"posed to consider, in the first place, the moral "qualifications requisite for a right understanding "of the Sacred Word. An inquiry will then be "instituted into the paramount authority of that

"Word, as a rule of faith, and its own interpreter: "and, in connection with this, will follow a consi- "deration of the subsidiary means by which, sub- "ject to that authority, its interpretation must be "sought. The ground being thus cleared of preli- "minary difficulties, and a secure basis laid for a "solid fabric of Scripture truth, the question how "the superstructure is to be raised, will then re- "main to be considered. This will lead to some "observations upon the proper mode of analyzing "the contents of Scripture, and of combining them "again into a coherent and harmonious system. "As supplementary also to this part of the inquiry, "some remarks will be necessary on the distinction "between the literal and figurative sense of Scrip- "ture; a distinction, affecting in its result many "important controversies in the Christian Church. "The inquiry may then be closed with a brief con- "sideration of the sacred charge committed to the "Church, of preserving the truth inviolate; accom- "panied with some not unseasonable observations "on the conduct of our own Church in particular, "in this respect; on its purity in doctrine and in "discipline, its safety, as a guide to Scripture truth, "and its adherence to those sound principles of in- "terpretation, which afford the best security against "the 'perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds,' "and can alone prevent us from being 'carried about "with every wind of doctrine.'"

Next, in the progress of executing this plan, he sets forth, "That the willing and ingenuous mind, the "free and unrestrained surrender of every thought

"and purpose, of every imagination and affection, "to the all-perfect will of God, is the first principle "of religious duty, the germ of every thing which "is afterwards to expand and ripen into action;" in other words, that "docility, or an aptitude to "receive instruction, is the first requisite towards "the acquisition of scriptural knowledge;" and on the contrary, that "the dispositions repugnant to "that character, are carelessness, indifference to "truth, indolence, rashness, a spirit of scepticism, "and self-conceit, pertinacity in retaining opinions "hastily taken up, love of novelty, and a proneness "to abandon what is sanctioned by long-established "authority, and well-tried experience." Proceeding from which to establish the sufficiency and paramount authority of holy Scripture, on the one hand, he contravenes, first, "the papist," who "insists on "the necessity of an infallible judge, or interpreter "of doctrine, in the person of some visible head of "the Church;" secondly, the "various sects," who contend "that every doctrine of holy Writ must "bend to the decision of human reason, as the su-"preme judge in matters of faith;" and thirdly, the "multifarious order of interpreters, who give "supreme sway to a supposed inward light, or im-"mediate communication from the Holy Spirit, sup-"plementary to Scripture, and infallible, as well "as irresistible, in its operations:" on the other hand, he points out the regard which is justly due to these, i. e. to human authority, and reason, and spiritual illumination, "in a subsidiary and subor-"dinate capacity," declaring it erroneous wholly to

reject, or disallow them. And having thus completed, in four lectures, what may be called the preliminary part of his subject, he closes with the following impressive sentence: " 'Other foundation can " no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus " Christ.' — He is 'Head over all things to the " Church.' — His Word 'giveth light and under- " standing to the simple.'—His 'grace is sufficient " for us.' These are first principles, invariably to " be adhered to, and to which every other rule is " secondary and subordinate. But in the applica- " tion of these principles to the purposes of spiritual " instruction and improvement, our own coopera- " tion is made requisite by Him who is 'the Author " and Finisher of our faith.' He hath taught us, " that whatever talents, natural or spiritual, are " bestowed upon us, must be used in His service; " and that with them we are to 'occupy till He " come.' For, 'of Him, and through Him, and to " Him are all things; to whom be glory for ever. " Amen.' "

From this, the Author commences his proposed analysis of Scripture truth, shewing the proper distinctions between what is fundamental, and what is not so, and between the several dispensations of revealed religion, the Paradisiacal, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian. He represents, also, as highly important to be observed, the variety of subject-matter contained in the sacred writings; to wit, prophecy, and history, and doctrine, and morality; and the immediate occasions and purposes for which they appear to have been composed, though capable,

for the most part, of a general application. Then he adopts a synthetic view, combining what has thus been analyzed, and points out, "first, the verbal "analogy of Scripture, or the collation of parallel "texts illustrative of its characteristic diction and "phraseology; secondly, the historical analogy, or "collation of parallel events and circumstances for "the elucidation of facts; thirdly, the doctrinal "analogy, or collation of parallel instructions re-"lative to matters of faith and practice:" each of which he handles and illustrates by examples with an admirable judgment and discretion, proving the utility, or rather necessity, of giving heed to them; and subjoins cautions, of which the following is a summary: "Care is to be taken, not to confound "seeming with real analogies; not to rely upon "merely verbal resemblances, when the sense may "require a different application; not to interpret "what is parallel only in one respect, as if it were "so in all; not to give any parallel passages so "absolute a sway in our decisions, as to overrule "the clear and evident meaning of the text under "consideration; and above all, not to suffer our "eagerness in multiplying proofs of this kind, to "betray us into a neglect of the immediate context "of the passage in question, upon which its signi-"fication must principally depend. The simplest "mode of proceeding is indeed the safest. Every "difficult or doubtful text is first to be considered "by itself; then, with its context; then, with other "passages of Scripture parallel to it in any respect; "and then, by the additional light of such extra-

"neous illustrations as can be brought to it from "the stores of human knowledge."

Hereupon succeeds the consideration of the figurative and mystical interpretation of Scripture; in pursuing which, the Author, with an excellent precision, steers the difficult course of defining, first, "the proper use of this mode of interpretation, and "the errors arising from its neglect;" secondly, "in what the abuse of it consists, and the errors "arising from carrying it to excess." It would be too much here to describe the rules and exemplifications which he lays down. Suffice it to remark, that they are such as must at once commend themselves to every intelligent mind, both by their evident correctness, and by the spiritual liberty which they give scope to. The conclusion, however, shall be given, to convey an idea of the excellent line which is marked out by them. Near the end of the seventh lecture he says, "It is, indeed, of the first "importance, that we take heed neither to add to, "nor to diminish from the Word of God; and that "we beware of confounding with His unerring wis-"dom, the wanderings of our own wayward fancies. "In no case are these cautions more necessary than "with reference to the subject now before us. For "here it is, that oftentimes the best disposed are in "the greatest danger of being led astray. Eager "to explore the depths of Divine knowledge, wrap-"ped up in admiration of what he imagines he has "discovered through some new channel of informa-"tion, and relying implicitly on the Divine accept-"ance of his pious labours, the mystic proceeds

"fearlessly, nor easily brooks restraint in the ardour of his pursuit. But let him take heed: if "Reason may not usurp authority over the written "Word;—if the Church, ordained by its heavenly "Lord and Master for the preservation of the truth, "must bow to that authority;—if neither public "nor private judgment may overstep its boundaries;—far less may such an unstable power "as the human imagination, be allowed any absolute sway. Nevertheless, let not the dry and spiritless critic conceive that he is shewing a superior "wisdom, in fastidiously slighting any source of real "information which that Word opens to him, whether conveyed in mystic terms, or in those of plain "and literal signification."

The last sermon, or lecture, connects the Church with the preservation of Scripture truth. The Church universal, and specially the Church of England as a branch of it, is alleged to have been instituted for that purpose by the Divine wisdom, and to have been found an effectual instrument. As to this, towards the end, he writes—"Among the subsidiary means for a right interpretation of the "Word of God, the authority of the Church, building her faith upon the Scriptures, and professing "to be the keeper and witness of holy Writ, claims "our chief regard. No inquiry therefore can be "more important, than that which is to ascertain "whether *our own* Church has in this respect faithfully discharged her duty. And here we confidently challenge inquiry. We contend, that her "moderation is no less conspicuous than her fidelity

" and firmness; that her doctrine is scriptural; her " discipline apostolical; her worship pure and pri- " mitive. With unceasing care she trains her chil- " dren in the true faith and fear of God, and 'has " no greater joy than to hear that they walk in the " truth.' Her authority is parental, not despotic. " She seeks not to 'have dominion over their faith, " but to be helpers of their joy.' "—" If these con- " siderations be of any weight, they will lead us " uniformly to acquit ourselves as steadfast members " of the communion to which we belong; desirous " to perpetuate its blessings in this our highly- " favoured land, willing to communicate its benefits " to others, and vigilant to protect its ancient and " well-established foundations against all who would " endeavour its overthrow, either by open violence, " or by undermining subtlety. This vigilance and " this fidelity we shall best evince, by thoroughly " examining wherein the strength of our fortress " lies, and on what support, Divine and human, " it principally depends; by cautiously guarding " against specious plans of union or alliance, where " the true principles of union are wanting; and by " acting up to the full measure of our duty as faith- " ful soldiers and servants, under the great Captain " of our salvation."

The foregoing is offered as very far from an adequate account of Dr. Van Mildert's Bampton Lectures. At a time when every fluent textuary claims to be esteemed a competent interpreter of holy Writ, and commonly has his claim allowed, not a more necessary argument could have been taken up than

one designed to establish the true principles of Scripture interpretation, and exhibit the necessary qualifications for the work. Nor does the performance fall short of the intention. The Author can truly say, that a third perusal of these sermons, with a view to this imperfect Memoir, has considerably increased his admiration of them. There is to be observed in them, certainly not less than in the Boyle Lecture Sermons, a combined depth of wisdom, and clearness of style, denoting an intellect of no ordinary stamp. Also, they breathe throughout, a tone at once fearless and considerate, and are evidently pervaded by a sentiment of pious veneration for their subject. The few extracts which it has seemed right to make, are incidentally so many examples of this, and strongly express the heart's desire of the Lecturer, that all should read the Scriptures with understanding; his aim simply was, to keep them from the perversions of fanatical and superstitious, and of foolish and presuming men. The circulation of these Lectures has consequently exceeded the usual circulation of volumes, possessing so decidedly a learned character. During the first year of their publication, five hundred copies were disposed of; a second and a third edition have been since required.

At the time when Dr. Van Mildert preached the Bampton Lectures, and was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity, the Writer of these sheets was resident in Oxford as an undergraduate. Hence he was frequently a guest at the table of his relative, and can well remember his habit of adapting

his conversation at once to please, and inform, and impart wisdom to the young; his readiness to say something interesting on all occasions; and his watchfulness to encourage the timid and reserved, by kindly taking up, and repeating in his own felicitous way, their imperfect sentences and ideas. He can also remember with what high gratification he listened to him, both in the pulpit of the University, and in his lecture-room. But he will not attempt from recollection a distinct account of his divinity lectures, lest he should be guilty of doing them discredit. In proof, however, that his admiration was not the result of a mere undiscerning predilection, he is able to state, that the attraction of them was more than ordinary, and that the hearers were always remarkably numerous and attentive, and departed with expressions of satisfaction. Respecting the business in general of the University, Dr. Van Mildert chose not much to intermeddle with it; except that, of course, he took an interest in the appointment of public Preachers, and in the concerns of the Clarendon Press, of which he was appointed a Delegate. In this latter capacity, from his extensive acquaintance with theological bibliography, his services were peculiarly useful to an institution which of late years has been instrumental in republishing, either wholly or in part, the writings of our eminent Divines.

Yet, as to the above period, be it subjoined, in proof of the high reputation of the Divinity Professor, that he appears to have been consulted on theological points, by men of no mean consideration;

two of whom have since adorned the episcopal bench. There have been found letters addressed to him by Heber and Jebb, requesting professional advice, with copies of the answers which he returned. These however, though still interesting, and highly creditable to both parties, are not of a kind to be here laid before the public. A chief objection is, that besides occupying too much space of themselves, they might hardly be intelligible without some additional notices of the writings to which they refer. At the same time, it is proper to mention, that in 1816, by request of his Patron, the Earl of Liverpool, he preached the annual sermon, on Trinity Monday, before the Corporation of Trinity House; in which, from the text—"None of us liveth to "himself," Rom. xiv. 7, he ably points out and enforces the social design of Christianity, or the connection between genuine benevolence and pure religion, with an application to the peculiar objects of that society.

In the spring of 1819, Dr. Van Mildert was promoted to the episcopal bench. The See of Llandaff, which had become vacant by the translation of Dr. Marsh to Peterborough, on the lamented death of Dr. Parsons, was offered to him, and, after a short deliberation, accepted. Upon this he resigned the Preachership of Lincoln's Inn, but still for a time retained the Regius Professorship, with its appendages. Being thus set in authority, he appears to have undertaken and carried on the duties of his new office with a happy mixture of righteous zeal and discretion. One of his first steps on this ap-

pointment, was to open a communication with the Rev. W. Bruce Knight, who had been examining chaplain to his predecessor. To this Gentleman, whom he afterwards made Chancellor of the Diocese, the Writer is indebted for the perusal of a series of letters, in which the Bishop expresses his mind as to a friend, whom he had found in all respects worthy of his entire confidence and affection; and by the aid chiefly of these, and of some recollections furnished by the same liberal hand, it is now intended to give a general outline of his diocesan conduct and administration.

Bishop Marsh, during his occupancy of Llandaff, had revived with much good effect the office of Rural Deans. To continue and preserve in an efficient state the establishment of these useful superintendents throughout his diocese, was evidently an important object in the mind of the new Bishop, and one of the first which he deemed worthy of his attention. In an early circular, he declared himself well aware of the advantages which had already been experienced from the revival of that ancient institution; and he wrote to one of the body, respecting his first report—" It is gratifying to find " that the parishes in your district, are in general so " well conditioned, and are either improved, or im- " proving, as circumstances permit. More cannot " reasonably be expected; and with such able and " vigilant coadjutors as the Rural Deans in my " Diocese, I feel confident that we shall continue " to gain ground." Again and again, also, does he

express much solicitude to keep the stations adequately supplied.

Another matter, which almost immediately engaged his attention, was the alarming deficiency of church room in the most populous town in his diocese. On his return from a visit to that quarter, he says, "I have now seen Merthyr Tydvil, and am "more deeply impressed than ever with the neces-"sity that something should be done speedily to-"wards providing for its spiritual exigencies, which "at present are really deplorable, and if no remedy "be applied, must soon become desperate." In this, however, the Bishop had to undergo much disappointment and vexation. Nothing, indeed, could be more favourable than the example of the Marquis of Bute, the Lord Lieutenant of the county, and a great proprietor in the district. That nobleman, of his own accord, came forward with spontaneous offers of assistance, having desired the Bishop, soon after his accession to the See, to consider and inform him how best he might promote the religious welfare of the increasing population on his property: but there was a lamentable want of cooperation on the part of those, from whom, on account of their interest and station in the place, a corresponding zeal might reasonably have been expected; and little more than a considerable enlargement of the parish church could at that period be carried into effect. This matter, more than any other connected with his Diocese, appears to have weighed heavily on the Bishop's mind. He always esteemed it a

paramount duty, that they who brought together large numbers of people for secular purposes, should be mindful to provide for their spiritual well-being: he considered them as masters, obliged, by every principle both of reason and of Scripture, to procure for their workmen means of participation in public worship, and in all the sacred ordinances of the Church.

On being informed of the regulation made by his predecessor, to admit no Literates as candidates for Holy Orders, who had not been educated at one of the divinity schools of Cowbridge and Usk, within his Diocese, the Bishop not only approved of the regulation, but, farther, drew up a collection of rules, by which the proceedings at those establishments were to be governed. Also, in many of his letters he instituted inquiries into their conduct, and shewed an unremitting anxiety to keep them in a respectable and an improving state; evidently considering the welfare of the Diocese to be in a great measure dependent on their efficiency. At the same time, in respect to all, whether Graduates or Literates, who presented themselves to him as desiring to take Orders, he appears to have been constantly mindful of the Apostle's counsel, "Lay hands suddenly on no man." The utmost previous care was exerted by him, both in person, and through his chaplain, to ascertain their religious, moral, and literary fitness for the sacred office; and he endeavoured continually by degrees, so far as might be without a repelling harshness, to heighten the required qualifications. As to this he said, "I am more and more convinced

"that a little strictness will ultimately do us much "good:" and again, on a certain occasion, "I am "quite sure that we are doing good, not only to the "Church generally, but to the individuals them-"selves, by this salutary strictness." Nor did the result fail to answer his predictions; for, at a subsequent period, he had occasion to remark, "Your "report of the respective candidates for orders has "been highly satisfactory, and I rejoice in hoping "that we are less likely than heretofore to be trou-"bled with discreditable applications."

As to the Welsh language, he laid down, in contradiction of some unfounded rumours that he was inclined altogether to dispense with it—"I do not "think that it need be insisted upon for admission "to Orders; but certainly I should not think of "licensing any person to a Curacy, or of instituting "any person to a Benefice, where that language was "necessary to the pastor, without being assured of "his competency in that respect. It ought, there-"fore, to form a part of the candidate's examination "for Orders, that I may know into what Cures or "situations in my Diocese I can properly admit "him; and every candidate should understand, that "without a proficiency in Welsh, his sphere of uti-"lity, and consequently of admissibility in my Dio-"cese, must be very circumscribed." So far, indeed, was he from overlooking the importance, or rather necessity, of addressing the people in their own language, that this was a point to which he gave a more than ordinary share of his attention; and he anxiously promoted the translation into Welsh of

several of the tracts on the list of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.

When it seemed necessary to admonish or reprove, Bp. Van Mildert proceeded with an admirable mixture of firmness and moderation. He neither spared the individual, to the scandal of the Church; nor did he, in his zeal to uphold the Church's purity, set at naught individual feelings, and extenuations. Upon one occasion, when some amendment was required in a certain institution, he observed, "It is "a delicate matter, and will require an even and "steady hand, and some knowledge of mental che-"mistry, to guard against any sudden effervescence." In another case, likewise, speaking of one whom he considered to be rather over-zealous, and aiming at impracticabilities, he remarked, "I honour his good "intentions; but a sufficient quantum of tact, dis-"cretion, and knowledge of men and manners, are "exceedingly necessary in these times, to render "even the best intentions available to any good "purpose." These, as to the point in hand, were the Bishop's axioms. He was, nevertheless, well aware that there is no real prudence in a shrinking caution and timidity, and could freely, though not harshly or unkindly, charge a delinquent with the things which were said against him. Respecting, also, the location of Curates, and other diocesan arrangements and appointments, while his first object, decidedly, was to place every one in the situation best adapted to his mental faculties and constitution, he reckoned it next desirable to gratify what, he conceived, might reasonably be the wishes and

expectations of the laity and clergy, in the several quarters of his Diocese. His letters abound with evidence how great his care was to give offence to none, but to please all men for their good to edification, and to promote, by all means, the general improvement.

It were an omission not farther to state, that by presence, as well as by letter, Bp. Van Mildert endeavoured to advance the above objects. From Midsummer 1821, he engaged Coldbrook House, near Abergavenny, for his residence, whenever health and circumstances would permit. It is well known, that, of the two Palaces belonging to this ancient See, one was long ago alienated, and the other for above a century has been in ruins. Hence had arisen much inconvenience and detriment to the spiritual concerns of the population; and it is worthy of record respecting the Subject of this Memoir, that to him pertains the honour of being the first prelate who for a long series of years resided in the Diocese of Llandaff. During the periods of his abode at Coldbrook, the Bishop made himself personally accessible both to the Gentry and Clergy of the surrounding district, receiving them with a truly episcopal courtesy and hospitality, attending to their sentiments and wishes, and freely conferring and taking counsel with them concerning every good suggestion which they had to offer. Thence also he proceeded and performed two Visitations of his Diocese, in the years 1821 and 1825, having been prevented in 1824 by a painful and distressing malady, which severely tried his always weakly constitution. The Charge

which he delivered at his first Visitation, was published the same year; but that which he delivered at his second, was not committed to the press. His published Charge began with acknowledging the improved state of the Diocese, and earnestly pressing upon the notice of the Clergy how much, in several respects, was still wanting. Thence he proceeds to admonish his hearers of the signs and agitations of the times, and specially of their own straitened situation between infidelity and irreligion on the one hand, and fanaticism and schism on the other: and having given them, as to this, some discreet counsel, savouring of his accustomed wisdom and moderation, and expressed his pleasure at the prospect of holding a more frequent intercourse with them, he concluded with—"For the present, I bid you fare-"well; earnestly imploring the Divine blessing upon "our mutual endeavours to promote that great pur-"pose for which the Gospel was promulgated to the "world, and our great Master lived and died, 'Glory "to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good "will towards men.'" At every station in his progress, the Bishop was hospitably welcomed and entertained by the principal inhabitants of the place or neighbourhood; and such, in return, was his Christian urbanity and conversation, that he won the hearts of all who met him. Moreover, he failed not, during his summer residences and visitations, to bestow a full measure of regard on the several charitable institutions within his sphere. Constantly did he express a lively interest in, and contribute largely to, the welfare of all that were in accordance

with Church principles. One, however, must here be specified, as an object of his most particular regard, namely, "The Charity for the Relief of the "Widows and Orphans of necessitous Clergymen" in his Diocese: the prosperous condition of that in Glamorganshire, of which his friend and chaplain, the Rev. W. Bruce Knight, was the treasurer and secretary, proved, from time to time, a source to him of more than ordinary satisfaction.

From a wish to keep the foregoing outline of his first episcopal administration unbroken, some material circumstances of Bp. Van Mildert's life have been passed by, which at this point it becomes expedient to recollect.

The earliest of these to be here noticed is, that before he had been seated a year on the English Bench, a translation to the Irish was designed for him. At the latter end of January 1820, he received, by a letter from Lord Liverpool, an offer of the Archbishopric of Dublin. Nothing could have been more handsome than the terms in which this offer was made, and the Bishop appears to have duly felt it as a distinguished mark of confidence and esteem conferred on him by the Prince Regent, and his minister. Yet he resolved, without hesitation, to decline it. Insuperable objections presented themselves, which he stated by return of post, as follows: "My attachment to England, and to the "many ties and connexions which must in a great "degree be sacrificed by a residence in the sister "country, is alone sufficient to incline me to con-"tinue here, in preference to any situation abroad,

" however superior in rank or emolument. Being
" also totally a stranger to the country, the habits,
" and the society of Ireland, I should feel myself
" under peculiarly disadvantageous circumstances,
" arising from the want of such local knowledge
" and experience as would be requisite to the ef-
" fective discharge of the duties devolving on me."

The next offer, which came to him within half a year of the foregoing, was happily more in accordance with his sentiments and habits. Bp. Tomline, being translated from Lincoln to Winchester, in July 1820, vacated the Deanery of St. Paul's; on which the Bp. of Llandaff was judged the fittest person to succeed him in that eminent situation. In tendering this preferment, Lord Liverpool expressly stipulated for residence six months in the year at least, and at the same time, for an increased attention both to the fabric and services of the cathedral, which he justly considered the most important in the kingdom. On these conditions, accordingly, Bp. Van Mildert became Dean of St. Paul's, resigning every other preferment which until then he had been holding to aid the insufficient revenues of his Bishopric; and faithfully did he set himself to discharge them. At his instance, and under his auspices, repairs and decorations were carried into effect, to the *full* extent that the funds designed for such uses would allow.

In the November following the Bishop's appointment to the Deanery, occurred Queen Caroline's public attendance at St. Paul's. This necessarily occasioned him much apprehension and trouble; the more,

for that he was suffering from ill health, and had recently been attacked in a riotous manner, on her Majesty's account, by the baser sort of his parishioners at Ewelme, although he had not taken a prominent part in the proceedings against her in the House of Lords. His indisposition, however, besides the fact of its not being his month of residence, amply justified him in declining to be present: and his views of the conduct proper to be observed being adequately supported both by the civil and ecclesiastical superintendents, little or no serious disturbance took place.

In the autumn of 1823, the Bishop produced a very important work, such as might alone have gained him a high literary reputation. His connexion, while at Oxford, with the Clarendon Press, which, as has before been remarked, is much occupied with new editions of our old Divines, may have been the immediately moving cause. Certain, however, it is, that he had long before conceived the idea, which at this period he happily executed, of publishing complete the valuable writings of Dr. Waterland. Besides the advantage to religious students of having, collected and arranged for their use, the works of so eminent a theologian, many of which were scarcely to be met with, there is added to this edition a volume of new and interesting matter from private stores, and prefixed to it "A Review of the Author's Life and Writings," from the Bishop's pen. With the exception of his posthumous Sermons, the publications of Dr. Waterland were nearly all, more or less, of a controversial character. These,

together with the circumstances of the times, and the characters of the leading men on the opposite side, are described by the Editor with a singular comprehensiveness and perspicuity. Evidently bringing to bear on his subject an exact discernment, and an ample measure of learning and research, he states the proceedings, and represents the arguments of both Dr. Waterland and his antagonists, foremost of whom was Dr. Samuel Clarke, in a manner which leaves nothing to be desired. And certainly, the æra when those great men lived and wrote, is shewn to have been a critical one for the Church. Bp. Bull, indeed, had just before triumphantly refuted the chief of the foreign Arian and Socinian writers, and, with them, their few insignificant echoists in this country. But when, after his death, such an able man as Dr. S. Clarke came forward to resuscitate the question on English ground, had not such a champion as Dr. Waterland also stood forth, powerfully to maintain and urge the truth, and to lead on the inferior band of its adherents, the consequences would probably have been, for a time, deplorable. Semi-Arianism, tending naturally to Arianism, and thence, to the varieties of Socinianism, and even Deism, might have obtained a lodgment within the borders of our Sanctuary, as it has within certain of the foreign protestant Churches, and might hardly, after a long prevalence, have been driven out. Great reason, therefore, have we to look back, with a lively interest and gratitude, on the "good fight" which was then fought by Dr. Waterland, and to be fond of having our memories refreshed concerning

the religious transactions and controversies, at the head of which he was almost compelled, having no such design, to take his place. Nor will it be too much to say, that one more worthy than Bp. Van Mildert could not have been found to review the life and writings of so illustrious a defender of the orthodox faith. He undeniably possessed a corresponding clearness and profundity of intellect; an equally distinct perception of, and affection for, the truth; and, altogether, a strong congeniality of mind and sentiment in every important point. Well, accordingly, did he execute his undertaking, both as to the original part, and as to judiciously condensing and arranging the materials which were liberally consigned to him. In erecting a monument to the reputation of Dr. Waterland, he has surely erected one also to his own. Yet of this he appears to have had no thought, neither in the concluding paragraph of his "Review," where he states the sentiments and motives which had actuated him, and the painful hinderances which he had experienced; nor in the following extract from a letter to a friend, where, after commending the sound principles and reasonings of Waterland, he proceeds to say, "As to my "own humble labours, in the character of editor "and biographer, if I have at all succeeded in faci-"litating to less-informed students the pleasure and "instruction to be drawn from these writings, and "at the same time to give a readier insight into the "ecclesiastical history of a brilliant period in our "Church annals, I have attained my chief object, "which was not fame, but utility. The labour,

" however, has perhaps been greater than that of " many undertakings, which might have been of a " more attractive kind."

With this, the Writer would dismiss the subject, and pass on, but he has before him a later document respecting it, of a character too interesting to be omitted; viz. a copy, in the Bishop's handwriting, of a letter to a friend, with reference to a conversation which had evidently been designed to draw from him, for some literary purpose, what more might properly be said about the persons or matters that were mentioned in his Life of Waterland. The date of the paper is Jan. 1825, and the Bishop remarks in it as follows: " I have been musing on " what you lately said respecting an intended arti- " cle on the new edition of Waterland. Your wish " seemed to be, that I would suggest any topic of " observation which it might be proper or desirable " to bring forward. Some few supplemental mat- " ters might, I think, be introduced. For instance, " respecting Dr. Clarke, there is room for a little " more discussion, both of his character and his " writings. I have no doubt that he was a very " sincere Christian, conscientious, and pious, and, " moreover, that he meant to be, and believed him- " self to be, a *Trinitarian.* His anxiety, however, " to make his interpretation accord with that of the " Church, led him to such refinements and subtleties " in reasoning, as, in any other man, I should say " were hardly consistent with real integrity of pur- " pose. Yet in Clarke, I believe, there *was* that " integrity; and I can look upon his errors (for

"such Waterland, I think, has demonstrated them
"to be) with far more charity, than upon the use
"which has been made of them to serve the cause
"of a species of Unitarianism, which he would have
"regarded with abhorrence. Nor is this all. His
"(Clarke's) work is not without its merits, and its
"utility. A more substantial refutation of Sabel-
"lianism, and the errors bordering upon it, can
"hardly be desired: and errors of that cast, it
"should be remembered, were rife in his days, as
"the writings of Clendon, Nye, and others, bear wit-
"ness. It was doing service, therefore, to strike a
"blow of this kind at *one* specious and prevailing
"heresy: and I think there can be little doubt, that
"many readers, finding *this* notion to be so utterly
"unscriptural, would be prepared to receive more
"readily, not Dr. Clarke's own hypothesis, but that
"of the generally received opinion of the Church.
"His book might also answer this purpose in an-
"other way. It clearly shews that Divinity, in
"some sense, is predicated of the Son, and also of
"the Holy Ghost; which, again, strikes at the root
"of Unitarianism, whether of the present day, or of
"his time. It is manifest, however, that though
"there *seems* to be but a shade of difference be-
"tween Clarke's tenets, and those of the Church,
"there is in reality *such* a difference as all his ta-
"lent and ingenuity could not reconcile; and that
"the more he labours to bring them up to the
"standard of orthodoxy, the more completely he
"establishes the catholic faith, and upsets his own.
"It is very remarkable, that this was the effect

" actually produced on the acute and powerful mind
" of Bp. Horsley. Having, before he sat down to
" the perusal of Dr. Clarke's book, so far removed
" his own doubts as to be satisfied of the preexist-
" ence of our Lord, and that He was the Maker of
" all things, but still (as he states) wavering between
" the Arian tenets and the catholic faith, he rose
" from the perusal of it a *firm and decided Trini-*
" *tarian.* He also acknowledges that Dr. Clarke's
" book, as a digest, may assist those who are well
" qualified to use it, in forming a judgment for
" themselves. But he strongly deprecates the use
" of it by those who are not accustomed, or not well
" qualified, to think for themselves; and assigns
" such reasons for this caution, as fully justify
" Waterland in the stand which he made against it.
" (See the whole passage in Horsley's seventeenth
" letter to Priestley; also a passage in his fifteenth
" letter, in which Waterland is briefly vindicated
" against a misrepresentation.) To my mind, in-
" deed, nothing is necessary to justify Waterland's
" zeal in this controversy, but to consider the con-
" sequences that must follow upon conceding that
" vital error, that πρῶτον ψεῦδος, the possibility of
" there being any more or less of perfection in the
" Godhead. With the intent of preserving the
" Unity entire and perfect, Arianism (such Arian-
" ism, I mean, as Dr. Clarke's) is a direct violation
" of it. The acknowledgment of a supreme God,
" and an inferior God, can be nothing but Poly-
" theism; and therefore, however mysterious and
" incomprehensible the subject may be, the faith of

"the catholic Church is certainly more rational, in-
"asmuch as it retains the belief of an inexplicable
"Unity in the Godhead, in preference to that of a
"duality or plurality of separate Beings, which,
"whether independent of, or subordinate to each
"other, can never, in any sense, be regarded as
"constituting one God. I know not whether I
"make myself understood, and perhaps it is better
"to carry these metaphysical reveries no farther."

Not long after his appointment to Llandaff, Dr. Van Mildert was called upon for two public sermons; the one before "The Society for promoting "Christian Knowledge," at St. Paul's, on occasion of the yearly meeting of the charity school children of the Metropolis; the other, in the church of St. Mary Le Bow, before "The Society for propagating "the Gospel in Foreign Parts." Both these sermons are reprinted, and are undoubtedly worthy of their author. The former, preached in June 1820, on Prov. xix. 2, "That the soul be without knowledge, it is "not good," insists, with much sound reasoning and energy, on the necessity of combining instruction in the Christian faith with instruction in other kinds of knowledge: the latter, preached in February 1822, on 1 Cor. ix. 22, "I am made all things to all men, "that I might by all means save some," is designed to shew, by the example of St. Paul, how differently men of different opinions are to be addressed, and dealt with, and met, as it were, upon their own ground, (only without any compromise of the truth,) in order to their conviction and conversion. This sermon was much spoken of at the time, more than

anniversary sermons usually are, and is still deservedly remembered with admiration, as full of spiritual wisdom and discretion. The text had probably long before been fixed upon and revolved by the Bishop in his mind, since it has been found set down in a memorandum-book, amongst a number to be made use of in their season; on others of which he has likewise produced most instructive and highly-finished sermons.

From the time that the Subject of this Memoir took his seat in the House of Lords, he had not failed to deliver his sentiments and opinions on matters affecting the religious interests of the country; and he uttered what has generally been esteemed his principal speech in that assembly, during the time that he was Bishop of Llandaff. This, however, may be noticed more conveniently at a later period. At the present, there is only remaining to be brought forward, an interesting record of his views concerning the topic of education in Ireland.

In the year 1824 a commission was appointed "to inquire into the nature and extent of the instruction afforded by the several institutions in "Ireland established for the purpose of education, "and to report as to the measures which can be "adopted for extending generally, to all classes of "the people, the benefits of education." Such an inquiry necessarily involved more of a religious character than might be quite familiar to laymen, of whom the commissioners were composed. One of the number therefore, being on terms of intimacy, and indeed connected by family ties, with the Bishop

of Llandaff, applied to him for his thoughts on the subject; and the answer having been kindly placed at the Writer's disposal, appears important enough to be here given. "You have, indeed, work enough "upon your hands to call forth all your energies, "and to exercise your best judgment. As for any "help or advice that I can give you, it can only be "offered with entire deference to the opinions you "must be so much better able to form on the scene "of action, and with every circumstance immedi-"ately under your observation which should direct "your course. Judging from your statement of the "existing parties in Ireland, and their conflicting "views and prepossessions, I own, I can augur but "unfavourably of the issue even of the best-directed "labours in your department. To amalgamate such "materials seems almost as hopeless an attempt as "the discovery of the philosopher's stone. Whether "it be even a desideratum I am inclined to doubt, "having long been of opinion, that an honest avowal "of diversity of sentiment in matters of religion, "(provided it be not maintained by absolute intole-"rance and persecution on either side,) is preferable "to hollow and insincere professions of unanimity, "which can only serve to throw one or other of the "parties off their guard, and probably make the "better and unsuspecting among them ultimately "victims of the crafty and insidious. But to come "to particulars. A school in which there shall be "taught no Catechism, appears to me an absolute "solecism in religious education. Merely to read "the New Testament, and get it by heart, can to a

" child never answer the purpose of conveying clear
" and definite apprehensions of its meaning. Summa-
" ries of doctrine, such as Creeds, Articles of Faith,
" &c., have been found necessary, throughout all
" ages of the Church, even for *adults;* the general-
" ity of whom are unable to collect for themselves,
" from the sacred writings, such concise and con-
" sistent views of Scripture-doctrine as may pre-
" serve them for error. Still more needful must
" catechetical instruction be to an *infant* under-
" standing; and an attempt to dispense with it, I
" can regard but as mere empiricism. That the
" reading of the Scriptures should nevertheless form
" a prominent part of instruction, is beyond a doubt.
" And since the Roman Catholics will neither allow
" the use of the same translation as the Protestants,
" nor admit the Bible to be read without note or
" comment, I see no possibility of an union with
" them in the work of school-education, but by each
" party, popish and protestant, using its own ver-
" sion of the Scriptures, and its own Catechism, or
" formula of interpretation. And I should the more
" readily acquiesce in this, because I entirely agree
" with you, that the indiscriminate use of the Bible,
" without any help or guide of this kind, would be,
" in effect, abandoning one of the best securities
" against endless diversities of religious opinion, and
" would tend more to the diffusion of every species
" of dissent, than to the support of that system of
" rational faith, and sober piety, which characterises
" our established Church. As to the proposal of
" a Harmony of the four Gospels, to be used as a

"school-book by all persuasions, it seems open to
"many and insuperable objections. How is it pos-
"sible to frame such a harmony as would meet
"the views of the Catholics, and leave them no
"pretext for keeping their children away from the
"schools? Can their views be met without com-
"promising the Protestant Faith? I can hardly
"conceive a compendium of this kind, which would
"be equally safe and satisfactory to both parties.
"The Papists charge even our translation with he-
"resy; and what a fatal impression would it not
"make upon the minds of our Protestant children,
"to be taught in the schools a different Bible from
"that which is read in the church! Of all devices,
"I should perhaps deprecate this the most. If the
"attempt, however, of such a harmony were made,
"it ought, at least, to undergo the most careful re-
"vision, and to receive the formal sanction of the
"heads both of the Romish and Protestant church:
"in which case, I think, we may safely predict, it
"will stand over 'ad Græcas kalendas.' Upon the
"whole, I expect little, if any, good to result from
"bringing up Papists and Protestants together in
"the same schools. A collision and hostility of
"sentiment, rather than a concurrence and good-
"will, appears to me likely to be the consequence;
"and knowing the superior *tact* and artifice of Ro-
"mish teachers, I should be apprehensive even of
"an increase of their influence by such a scheme.
"But if the attempt be deemed necessary, or expe-
"dient, too much care cannot be taken to conduct it
"upon real *bonâ fide* principles of abstaining from

"undue advantages on either side, and to allow to "each the unrestricted use of what they deem to be "the true Word of God, and of that interpretation "of it which they conscientiously hold to be correct. "Even with these safeguards, proselytism, on one "side or the other, may probably be the conse- "quence: and the utmost I should expect from car- "rying the plan into effect, would be such a preca- "rious sort of agreement, and good-will, as may be "supposed to subsist between brothers and sisters "of the same family, where the parents are of op- "posite religious persuasions, and satisfy their scru- "ples by training half of their progeny in one pro- "fession of faith, and half in the other; to the great "edification, no doubt, of each party, who must be "continually marvelling at each other, and vainly "attempting to guess which of them is travelling "in the right road."

These remarks have been transcribed at length, as pertaining to what is still likely to be a "vexata "quæstio." A scheme, indeed, is now in progress for the education of all classes of her Majesty's subjects in Ireland. It is far, however, from being satisfactory to all; and the complaints which are made of it tend remarkably to verify the foregoing opinions and predictions.

Dr. Van Mildert continued Bishop of Llandaff during a term of nearly seven years; at the end of which, to the surprise more perhaps of himself than of his friends, he received his last and highest elevation. In the month of March 1826, the venerable Barrington having departed this life, full of years

and honour, the vacant See of Durham was instantly offered to him by Lord Liverpool, and accepted. By fixing upon a person so devoid of family interest, to occupy that splendid position in the Church, the Minister shewed himself purely under the influence of a determination to advance the person who appeared to him the most worthy. A better account of this promotion, and of the Bishop's feelings and views respecting it, cannot be given than one from his own hand, in a letter which he immediately addressed to the Rev. W. Bruce Knight on the occasion :—

"My dear Sir,

"I have scarcely a moment to tell you of an event "which will probably surprise you almost as much "as it has surprised me—that I am appointed to "succeed my late venerable friend, Bishop Barring-"ton, in the See of Durham. This is perhaps, of "all possible appointments, the one which I could "least have expected. Yet gratifying as it cannot "but be, and greatly enhanced in value by the man-"ner in which it has been offered to me, I cannot "contemplate it without many anxious feelings. "Nor will you suspect me of dissembling, when I "assure you, that even this unsolicited and unex-"pected honour does not entirely overcome the re-"gret which I experience on quitting a Diocese, "where I have received such invariable kindness "and attention, and have derived so much real sa-"tisfaction. More especially do I feel this with "respect to yourself, and continually am I wishing "that I may be fortunate enough to meet with such "an one in Durham, to be my constant friend and

"coadjutor. I trust, however, that in London, at
"least, we may occasionally greet each other kindly,
"and talk over matters of mutual interest. I have
"been so beset this whole morning with visits, ei-
"ther of kindness or business, that I am able to say
"no more at present, except to desire my best re-
"gards to Mrs. Bruce Knight, and again to assure
"you that no change of place or circumstance can
"ever make me otherwise than most sincerely and
"affectionately yours.

"W. LLANDAFF."

"Deanery, St. Paul's, March 27, 1826."

Hence it is evident that the translation of Bp. Van Mildert to Durham was entirely unsolicited, and unlooked for, a spontaneous tribute to the high character which, in all respects, he had acquired, and maintained. Moreover, to the Writer of these pages the above letter, together with others which are to come, appears not a little valuable, as exhibiting the strong friendship and attachment which his revered Relative was in the habit of conceiving towards those whom, by experience, he found worthy. Justly may it be remarked, that nothing could have been more honourable, both to the Bishop and to his late Official, than the warm sentiments of regard therein expressed on the dissolution of their connexion, not unfit, it is trusted, though certainly not designed, for the public eye. As to that which he anxiously writes—"Continu-
"ally am I wishing that I may be fortunate enough
"to meet with such an one in Durham"—it is not to be supposed that none such was found, because

no correspondence of the same nature with that which has been referred to concerning Llandaff, is at hand concerning Durham. One and another might be there named, to whom probably the Bishop was not less warmly attached, and who were not less warmly attached to him. But the circumstances of that Diocese are not known to have given occasion for any series of letters like the foregoing; and if any such were to be obtained, no doubt they would exhibit, generally, a continuance, with only a few suitable changes or exceptions, of his previous methods and principles of administration. The letters in hand may now be cited from, more particularly than before; and it will be pleasing to bring them forward, both for the unaffected mention which they contain of matters belonging rather to the former than the present state of the See of Durham, and for the specimens shewn by them of a mind, which prosperity, instead of spoiling, could but render more nobly pious and benevolent.

About the middle of July 1826, the new Bishop made his public entry into the Diocese and Palatinate of Durham. The reception which he met with was highly gratifying, and his manner of going through the accustomed ceremonies, and replying to the persons and public bodies who came to greet him, afforded universal satisfaction. Sometime after, he thus wrote on the subject, and on the nature in general of his situation: "I am really vexed and "mortified at having so long neglected to acknow-"ledge your very kind and interesting letter. But

" I can truly say, that, since my coming here, my
" public duties and engagements have been so fre-
" quent and urgent, and my temporal and domestic
" of such a more than ordinary magnitude, that you
" are only one among many correspondents to whom
" I am still deeply in debt, and probably may con-
" tinue so for some weeks to come. Take this apo-
" logy as kindly as you can, and make the best of
" it, for my sake as well as yours; for it would
" grieve me beyond measure, if I thought you could
" for a moment suppose me unmindful of you, or
" unthankful for your proofs of affectionate regard.
" Still more inexcusable should I be, if I did not
" feel grateful for the assurances you give me that
" the rest of the Clergy, as well as yourself, retain
" so kindly an affection towards their late Diocesan,
" and follow him into his new station with those
" good wishes and benedictions, which are better
" worth than all that temporal honours or emolu-
" ments can bestow. Rumour, public or private,
" may probably have reported to you sundry mat-
" ters of public state and ceremony attendant upon
" the first entry of the new Lord into his Bishopric
" and Palatinate, which he had rather should be
" recorded by others, than by himself. Suffice it to
" say, that these have been gone through with much
" less fatigue or difficulty than the chief performer
" had anticipated, and apparently with mutual sa-
" tisfaction to the parties concerned. I were un-
" worthy, indeed, of the reception I have met with,
" both from the Clergy and Laity, if I did not re-
" tain a grateful sense of the attention and kindness,

" the more than ordinary courtesies and civilities, I
" have every where experienced. This is highly
" satisfactory, not only as indicating a predisposi-
" tion in my favour, but as an earnest, I trust, of
" such a continued good understanding between us,
" as may enable me to discharge the duties of the
" station with success. It also renders the station,
" weighty and arduous as it is, much less oppressive
" than might have been expected. And I am more-
" over thankful, that, notwithstanding so much per-
" sonal exertion, my health has throughout been
" unbroken by a day's illness, and, I am willing to
" hope, is firmer and better than it has been for
" some years past. The season, indeed, has been
" peculiarly favourable for a northern climate, and
" the air of this delightful spot seems likely to
" suit me extremely well. I often wish for you
" here, to taste its sweets: and though the country
" in general in Durham, is not comparable in pic-
" turesque scenery with Glamorgan, or Monmouth-
" shire, yet Auckland itself may vie, perhaps, with
" any individual spot in either of them. Do not,
" however, figure to yourself, in the Occupier of
" Auckland Castle, a man divested of cares and
" troubles. An enormous domestic establishment;
" an unavoidable expenditure, upon a scale which
" will probably make this See a much less produc-
" tive source of private wealth than some of much
" inferior revenues; the management also of those
" revenues; together with the incessant applications
" for contributions and patronage of every kind;
" besides the ecclesiastical concerns of the Diocese,

"in which many things require to be scrutinized "and rectified;—all these are sufficient to keep me "constantly in remembrance of the admonition, 'Be "not highminded, but fear;' and to think of pass- "ing through such a trial, without frequent solici- "tudes, misgivings, and perplexities, would require "firmer nerves, or greater presumption, than I pos- "sess. You may form some idea of the large scale "on which things are done here, when I mention "that at Durham Castle, in the Assize week, I en- "tertained in the course of three days upwards of "two hundred guests at dinner; and in my four "public days at Auckland Castle nearly three hun- "dred. A. C. Oct. 17, 1826."

This may be taken as an account of the first three months passed by the Bishop in his new Diocese. The next two letters which occur are dated Nov. 25th and 27th of the same year, and eminently shew a mind always "on charitable thoughts intent:" in them he writes—"I am anxious to be not quite so "tardy as heretofore in acknowledging your very "acceptable communications. In every respect, your "last kind letter gave me the truest satisfaction. It "is gratifying to receive such continued assurances "of regard and affection from those whom I shall "always reckon among my most valued friends, and "to hear that the concerns of a Diocese, in which I "take so sincere an interest, are flourishing, and "advancing daily more and more in what is good "and laudable. I enclose a draft upon my London "bankers for one hundred pounds, out of which, you "will be so good as to pay the same sums that I

"used to contribute annually, when Bp. of Llandaff, "to the following charities; viz. The Glamorgan-"shire Clergy Charity—The Bridgend National "Schools—The Llandaff ditto—The Merthyr Tyd-"vil ditto—The Chepstow ditto—The Bridgend "Dispensary. The remainder I wish to be distri-"buted to any poor Clergy in your neighbourhood, "or in any other way that you think more eligible. "I wish you to understand that it is my intention "to trouble you this way annually to the same "amount. If Llandaff has been a step to Durham, "Durham ought not to forget Llandaff. I would "apologize for giving you so much trouble, if I "were not assured that, whenever you can make "yourself useful, your motto is, 'Labor ipse volup-"tas.'" The Bishop's subscriptions to the above-named charities amounted yearly to 45*l.* 10*s.*, leaving for personal charity 54*l.* 10*s.* The Writer, however, is assured, on the best authority, that the Bishop gave annually much more than this to his former Diocese. He was invariably appealed to for churches, chapels, schools, and personal distress; and almost always he contributed largely, though desiring as little as might be to attract regard. His well-assorted liberality and delicacy will strongly appear by the following extracts:—"There are se-"veral points in your two last most kind and ac-"ceptable letters, which merited a much earlier ac-"knowledgment. But we have had, during the last "fortnight, (Dec. 23, 1826,) so many beautiful days, "that I have been tempted to pass much more of "my time than usual in outward air and exercise.

"Social parties, too, have occupied our evenings, as "well as mornings; so that altogether I am much "behindhand in my epistolary concerns. Let me "begin, however, with a topic on which some im-"mediate notice may be expected; I mean your "new chapel at Margam. I had always intended "to contribute something by way of token and re-"membrance, towards its equipments. My wish "was to have presented the Sacrament plate; and "if it be not quite settled that this is already "provided for, I hope you will reserve it for me. "The next best gift from me would perhaps be the "font; next, the books; and last, the bell. I am at "your service for either of these to the extent of "fifty pounds, not to be deducted from what you "have received for other purposes, but as an extra "donation for this specific use. You will do me a "kindness by settling this exactly in the way most "accordant to your own feelings, and making me "responsible for the cost. Poor —— has written "to acknowledge the receipt of his portion of my "donation, in a strain of overwhelming gratitude. "I have no wish for acknowledgments of this kind "from any of the parties. It will always suffice "that I learn from you how it has been appor-"tioned. In all these matters I wish particularly "not to appear to be running a race of popularity "with my successor in the See. It is much more "important that he should now hold the first place "in their affections; and I would sooner withhold "every remembrance of this kind on my part, than "lessen him in their estimation."

It was about this period, not long after the commencement of the year 1827, that the Earl of Liverpool experienced the attack which at once incapacitated him for public business, and shortly terminated in his death. The Bishop of Durham could not but be deeply affected by this event, both on public and private considerations. Lord Liverpool was the person who had brought him forward, and exalted him, from the purest motives, to his present elevated situation on the Bench; and though it may be doubted, by several tokens, whether, if his health had continued, he could much longer have kept affairs in their position, still it was, and always is, to be remembered, how long he had stemmed the advancing tide of innovation, quite as much by the moral and religious dignity of his character, as by any extraordinary talents, or powers of mind. Accordingly, the Bishop wrote respecting him, "I am not at present well, or in good spirits. The calamity that "has befallen the public in the stroke Lord Liverpool has received, added to those feelings of personal affection and respect which I entertain for "this most estimable of men, has thrown a gloom "and sadness over me, which I cannot dispel. God "only knows what may be the result. In my estimation, no loss could have been so irreparable to "the country, especially at this awful crisis, when "matters of the highest importance, both to Church "and State, seem to be hanging by a thread."

In the following September the Bishop wrote from Harrogate—"The bow must be unstrung occasionally. *Experto crede.* I am now, for instance, at

"this place, not because I am absolutely ill, but "because I am admonished, that, after a more than "usually laborious summer, accompanied with inci-"dental indispositions, it is advisable to retreat, for "a short interval, from the incessant publicity of "such a See as Durham, and to pass two or three "weeks here, in a sort of stupid recreation, for "which, to say the truth, I have but little appe-"tite. My Visitations and Confirmations through-"out the Diocese, occupied me about a month. I "was highly gratified, not only by the invariable "attention, respect, and kindness every where shewn "me by both Clergy and Laity, but also by finding "my Diocese, in general, well-conditioned, and its "Pastors well-disposed. The country, too, was new "to me, and exceedingly interesting and pleasing, "and the weather favourable. Since then, the As-"sizes at Durham called me to my Castle there, for "the usual hospitalities; and for the last two or "three weeks, that at Auckland has been almost "full of visitors; so that a little privacy here, with "Mrs. V. M., is quite a novelty, and is relished as "such by both of us. We must return to Auck-"land, however, on the 1st or 2nd of October, pre-"paratory to my Ordination there; and I find, by "a letter received to-day, that I must make my "appearance in the County before that time, to do "the honours to the Duke of Wellington, who is "coming amongst us within a fortnight." By this it appears that the Bishop, not long before, had visited and confirmed throughout his Diocese. On that occasion, he of course delivered a Charge, which

was afterwards published, and which, in a subsequent letter, he calls "homely." The Writer cannot clearly perceive his reason for affixing to it this rather disparaging epithet, though doubtless he had a reason in his mind. Plain and simple, indeed, it is, and perhaps somewhat more concise than his other compositions in style and language. Still it is evidently not the speech of one that is "rusticus," or "abnormis sapiens:" it is not only full of enlarged views, and sound wisdom, and an enlightened discrimination, but is, moreover, purely and elegantly constructed.

This Charge, like that already noticed at Llandaff, begins with local and diocesan, and thence proceeds to more general considerations. After a becoming tribute to the memory of his Predecessor, and expressions of satisfaction at the favourable reception he had met with, and the excellent condition, generally speaking, of the Diocese, he urges the necessity of continual efforts at improvement, and states some few particulars, to which, principally, attention should be directed. A more regular licensing of Curates; a better supply of Churches and Chapels, to supersede the occasion for performing Divine service in licensed school-rooms, and other unconsecrated buildings; and the propriety of admitting to Holy Orders, as Literates, only persons who have studied at St. Bees;—are the chief points which he thus brings forward. Then, adverting to subjects of more general interest, the Bishop remarks upon the growing disposition to make experiments in Church matters, rather than be guided by experi-

ence; and to wage war with established opinions, chiefly because they are established, and because, having originated in earlier times, they are (it is contended) unfit for the present advanced period of society. Also he notices as a doctrine recently invented, and powerfully advocated, that no favours, no privileges, no advantages, can equitably be allowed to the Church, which are not likewise allowed to every other religious community. Yet more dangerous than this open warfare, he accounts to be the insinuating pretext of amity and good-will, where it is manifest that no real approximation in principle can take place, but at the cost of sincerity and plaindealing; and shews, with an excellent temper and discretion, the proper sentiments and conduct of persons differing in religion towards each other. Next, as to the influence possessed by the Clergy, he points out that it is not more than they ought to have, and exert, for the people's good; and, in fact, is not so much as that assumed and organized by several other classes, or sects of religionists, without complaint: from which he takes occasion, in a nobly-wrought paragraph, to assert and prove, by a concise reference to history, that the Church of England, as by law established and defined, is so far from being a tyrannical incubus on the nation's energies, that it is in truth among the best bulwarks of religious liberty: "It has "rescued our country," he testifies, "at one period "from papal domination, and at another, from the "yoke, scarcely less galling, of sectarian usurpa-"tion. In both instances, it was hailed, not merely

"by its own members, but by those of almost every "communion, as the deliverer of all from thraldom "and oppression, and as the only authority under "which all might repose in peace and safety." Hereupon he enjoins, as the best method of encountering the present danger, a blameless conversation, beyond the power even of malignity to defame; an assiduous discharge, by each one at his post, of all pastoral duties, both private and public; and a care not to fall behind the progress of the age in any really good intellectual qualification. And he impressively concludes with inferring, "that our "conduct should exhibit firmness tempered by mo-"deration; a zeal according to knowledge; vigi-"lance untainted by mean suspicion; courtesy not "degenerating into feeble compliance; ingenuous-"ness free from offence, yet incapable of being mis-"understood: in short, that we adopt, as a golden "rule, that comprehensive exhortation of the Apo-"stle, 'In malice be ye children, but in understand-"ing be men.'"

In the autumn of this year, (1827,) the Duke of Wellington came (as expected) into the North, on a visit to the Marquis of Londonderry, at Wynyard. On this occasion, the Bishop, with a number of other distinguished persons, was invited by the noble Marquis to meet the great Commander of the age; and having accepted the invitation, he requested and obtained a promise from the Duke, to honour him with a visit at Durham Castle. An entertainment, accordingly, was prepared, and, besides the principal Guest, about a hundred and twenty of the Nobility

and Gentry of the County, and others of note, who were happily visiting in the neighbourhood, (among whom were Sir Walter Scott and Sir Thomas Lawrence,) sat down in the Castle hall to a sumptuous banquet. Every thing was suitably ordered and conducted, and the highest gratification was experienced. The sober state and magnificence of the arrangements, the princely sumptuousness of the provisions, and the becoming courtesy and appropriate addresses of the Right Reverend Host, were approved by all as fully adequate to the occasion, and wrought an impression not soon to be effaced.

Hitherto, scarcely any mention has been made of Bp. Van Mildert's conduct and speeches in the House of Lords. This omission has not arisen from forgetfulness. He was not forward to lift up his voice in that assembly on general, or merely political matters; and since the passing of the Clergy Residence Bill in 1817, the affairs of the Church had, for some years, been suffered to remain comparatively undisturbed. Accordingly, the Bishop had not frequently spoken, during the earlier period of his having a seat on the Bench; yet, whenever any point of religion or morality seemed to require elucidation, he had freely avowed his principles and sentiments; which, from the first, were listened to with much respect, even by those who were pledged against adopting them, and therefore, no doubt, prevailed greatly with the unprejudiced. Among other topics, which cannot distinctly be recollected, The Unitarian Marriage Bill; The Catholic Emancipation Bill, yearly introduced, of which more is to be said hereafter;

and the scriptural doctrine of Divorce, mooted in the Queen's case, had called forth a declaration of his opinions. At the period, however, to which we have now come, matters affecting our ecclesiastical establishment began to be revived, and pressed forward in a far more decided manner, as the Bishop had apprehensively foreseen, and predicted in his letters, from the time of Lord Liverpool's removal. The measure now brought on, and supported by a majority of the House of Commons, such as the Government thought not proper to withstand, was a Bill for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. To this the Bishop yielded his consent, in a speech of some length, delivered April 17, 1828: and twice subsequently, during the same month, he saw need to speak again on the subject. These speeches having been printed in the Mirror of Parliament, were circulated by the Author amongst his friends; and in a letter which accompanied one copy, he thus stated the principal aims and intentions of them: "The subject of the Test-repeal still hangs "a heavy weight upon my mind, which I cannot "effectually shake off. You will ask what I have "been doing? For an answer, I send you the only "correct copy that has appeared in print, of what I "said during the discussions. You will see, that "though I assented to the substitute for the Sacra-"mental Test, I did it not *con amore;* but that I "laboured hard to maintain the old-fashioned prin-"ciples of Church and State, to apologize at least "for this seeming departure from them, and to vin-"dicate it on such grounds only as should fully

"warrant me in resisting any farther encroach-
"ments, which may hereafter be grounded upon
"this measure, and which I have no doubt we shall
"have to encounter session after session, until all
"our ascendancy is done away. I have neither
"time nor inclination to go over the subject again,
"else I could add much to what you will read in
"these papers. My last speech, you will see, was
"called forth by strongly feeling an anxiety to ex-
"tricate myself from the vituperations of friends,
"and the compliments of foes, and to place myself
"at least on a somewhat better footing than those
"who were pleased to advocate the measure on views
"and principles most adverse to my own. In this,
"I trust, I have succeeded. Both in Parliament,
"and out of it, I have the satisfaction to hear that
"good Lord —— more than forgives me, and that
"some other Lords, of a different cast, will forbear
"enrolling me in their lists. As to the speeches
"themselves, they were delivered under disadvan-
"tages of real indisposition, and should not have
"been put even into this *private* circulation, but
"from an anxious desire that my own private friends,
"and my Clergy in particular, should know what I
"actually did say, and judge of me accordingly."
Such, by his own statement, was Bishop Van Mildert's design in the speeches which we are now upon. Accordingly, in the first of them, he asserted the preamble of the Bill, which laid down, "that the
"Protestant Episcopal Church of England is esta-
"blished permanently and inviolably," as the main ground, on which he would rest his allowance of its

provisions: and, remembering how well, and reverently, such a man as Bishop Sherlock could write in defence of the Sacramental Test, he was not prepared to join in ascribing to it profanation and impiety, or in admitting that those shocking consequences by any means necessarily belonged to it. Yet, for his own part, he would not uphold that Test, since, as at the present used, it not only failed to answer the purpose intended, but was too certainly, in many instances, giving rise to scandal and offence, and was strongly felt by most of the Clergy as a grievance. Then, speaking doubtfully of the substitute proposed, which was merely a disclaimer of hostility to the Church, he returned to his first strong hold, and said, "At present, my Lords, I "confess, the greatest security I look to in the Bill, "is that which is contained in its preamble. So "distinct and positive an affirmation by the two "Houses of Parliament, and eventually by the "Sovereign himself, that our Protestant Episcopal "Church is established permanently and inviolably, "cannot, I should hope, but have its due weight "upon the public mind. It will shew, that in the "view and intention of the Legislature, this union "of the Church with the State, as an integral part "of the constitution of the realm, is not to be "disturbed. I conceive, also, that the declaration "itself to be taken by the parties concerned, ought, "in fair construction, to be understood in connexion "with the preamble, as pledging the individual to "an acquiescence in that acknowledgment." After which, he concluded in the following truly liberal

strain: "My Lords, I have made these observations "from the anxious desire of not being considered, "by my concurrence in this measure, as compro- "mising a great and fundamental principle. And "I am the more anxious in this respect, from a firm "conviction, that, under Providence, the Church of "England is, at this moment, and has been ever "since the Reformation, one of the strongest bul- "warks of pure Christianity, not only in this coun- "try, but throughout the Christian world. But in "claiming thus much for our national Church, I do "not mean to disparage or depreciate the preten- "sions of those who separate from us. I cannot "forget what obligations we owe to them in litera- "ture, in arts and sciences, in religion, in biblical "criticism, and even in government itself. No one "can more willingly recognise these services than I "do. Many such there have been among them, and "many such, I trust, there still are. Yet I per- "suade myself, that such men, when not under "the influence of agitators unlike themselves, will "be most ready to allow the necessity of uphold- "ing that fabric of civil and ecclesiastical polity, "which has so long subsisted among us, even for "their own sakes. They cannot be so unread in "the history of our own country, as not to know "the evils that ensued on the overthrow of our "Church and Monarchy, during the Commonwealth. "They cannot but know, that when, on that over- "throw, a struggle took place for the ascendancy, "the party that first prevailed, denied toleration to "the rest; and the party that next succeeded, were

"still more intolerant than their predecessors. I "could mention to your Lordships innumerable pub- "lications in those times, written expressly against "toleration and religious liberty. And what could "be expected now, if our present establishments "were subverted? Under which of the several par- "ties, that might then prevail, do the various bodies "of Dissenters imagine that they would be more "secure, or enjoy a greater portion either of civil or "religious liberty? I will not trouble your Lord- "ships with farther observations, having been only "desirous to express my own strong feelings, as to "the necessity of upholding permanently and invio- "lably our long-established and venerable institu- "tions in Church and State, and the reasons which "induce me to concur in the second reading of the "present Bill."

His second speech on this subject, was principally in answer to a noble Earl, who had been charging the Episcopal Bench with illiberal and merely secular views, on account of the legal security which they required, and had exhorted them to rely wholly on their own good conduct, and the public estimation of their deserts. At the same time, he saw fit to express a wish, that, in compliance with the sentiments of many good men, some assurance of a belief in Christianity, more direct than that of taking certain oaths of office on the Gospels, should be required. His last speech was evidently for the removal of certain misrepresentations and misconceptions. In this he justly remarks, and says, "The "alliance between Church and State did not originate

"with the Test laws. That union existed long "before. The Sacramental Test, no doubt, was in- "tended, among other enactments, for its better "preservation. But if this has by lapse of time, "and untoward circumstances, become inexpedient, "or even impracticable, I do not see that the sub- "stitution of something else in its stead implies any "real change of principle. In short, the question "is, not whether the fortress shall be surrendered, "but whether the outworks shall remain as they "were, or be reconstructed on a somewhat different "plan. On this question there may be room for "diversity of opinion, without any intentional aban- "donment of the main object. My own simple view "of the matter is this; that the ancient safeguard, "whether, or not, it was, from the first, the best that "might have been devised, has now become alto- "gether ineffective, and almost nothing worth; and "therefore it is, that I am inclined to accept another "security, less exceptionable in its kind, and, I trust, "not less calculated to produce the intended effect. "Yet, after all, my Lords, I confess I have not so "much confidence in the result as some of its sup- "porters seem to entertain; nor am I entirely free "from misgivings and apprehensions in this respect. "Could I be assured that it would be regarded as a "final and conclusive measure, by those for whose "benefit it is intended, my satisfaction would be "much greater. But I see too much reason to ap- "prehend that it may be viewed by many of them "as an incipient measure only, opening a way for "some ulterior objects."—The Bill was at length

passed, with an amendment, inserting the words, "On "the true faith of a Christian," into the Dissenters' declaration on taking office. All the hope, however, which was probably conceived by many, (though hardly by the Subject of this Memoir,) that the Dissenters, on being so relieved, would adopt a more friendly disposition towards their Protestant brethren of the Church, has long since been utterly disappointed. It is a fact no less true than strange, that they, whom it was imagined the concession might tend to reconcile, are now generally fallen into taking counsel, and forming unholy leagues, with Papists and Infidels for our destruction.

During the same session with the above transaction, a Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill was also brought up from the House of Commons, where it had been passed by a small majority. By the Lords this was decidedly rejected. The Bishop spoke against the measure, as he had done on former occasions, and his speech was published in the Mirror of Parliament. But on this subject the proceedings of the present year were comparatively unimportant; and previously to entering upon the next, the following letter may conveniently be inserted:—

"Auckland Castle, Dec. 12, 1828.

"My dear Sir,

"I fear that not only you will begin to think I "have forgotten you, but that others, who have "been accustomed to taste a little of my good-will "to them at this season of the year, through your "hands, will begin to feel similar misgivings. To "certify you and them that this is not actually the

" case, I enclose a draft for 100*l.*, made payable to
" you as my *High Almoner*, and to be distributed,
" as usual, according to your wisdom and discretion,
" of which I have long had sufficient proof to as-
" sure me that it cannot be disposed of more to my
" satisfaction. So much by way of *peace offering*,
" in case I should have incurred your censure as a
" defaulter. I would that I had leisure to make
" farther amends, by disserting a little on times and
" circumstances past, present, and to come; afford-
" ing, as they do, abundant topics of somewhat fever-
" ish interest. Suffice it to say, that, though not
" without hopes, my fears preponderate as to what
" may be expected on the approaching session of
" Parliament. Not that I can, as yet, form even a
" conjecture as to what is to be done, or what is
" intended; but seeing the strange things which
" have come to pass, and the strange notions which
" are afloat, I feel it impossible to be at ease. Soon,
" however, we shall probably be enlightened a little,
" and know at least our position. Meanwhile, it
" tends to give some confidence, that a good national
" feeling has been so distinctly manifested; whence
" I am willing to augur a good effect on both the
" Government, and the Legislature. We had in-
" tended passing our Christmas here, but circum-
" stances have occurred which induce us to start
" immediately for London. There, I shall hope to
" hear from you, and shall be thankful for any thing
" you can tell me of Llandaff, and its many con-
" cerns, which impress me with frequent agreeable
" recollections. I have been comfortably well dur-

"ing my sojourn here, though it has been a busy "summer and autumn, and but few days have been "entirely free from public engagements, excursions, "or company at home. Accept our united best re-"gards to yourself and Mrs. Bruce Knight, and "believe me always, my dear Sir, truly and affec-"tionately yours.

"W. D."

One of the Bishop's public engagements alluded to in this letter, appears to have been the consecration of St. Paul's Chapel, in the parish of Ryton, Durham, on the 9th of the preceding September; when, at the request of the incumbent, Dr. Thorp, an early friend of his in the Diocese, and now Archdeacon of Durham, and Warden of the University, he preached a sermon, which was afterwards printed for private circulation. The contents of it cannot better be described than by entitling it, "A Sermon "on the reverence due to God's House, or Sanctu-"ary, as His dwelling-place; on the benefits to be "obtained by frequenting it; and on the proper "dispositions for that purpose." The text is Psalm xxvi. 8; and the whole (it will be seen) affords a fine specimen of the power of an elegant and learned mind to instruct, exhort, and persuade, in a manner interesting to all classes of believers.

We now come to the period, when it was determined by those at the helm of affairs, that the claims of the Roman Catholics should be conceded. Of these claims—especially of their claim to be admitted into the Legislature—Bishop Van Mildert had always been an uncompromising opponent; and on

the Relief Bill of 1825, he had delivered a speech against them, full of arguments the most apposite and convincing, set forth in the clearest light. Scarcely ever has a speech in Parliament been more justly commended by friends, or felt more irrefragable by adversaries, than this. In compliance with a wish very generally expressed, it was soon after published, and may be supposed, by the number of copies which were sold, to have had a considerable effect. Having begun with a notice of the urgency of the occasion, as involving deeply the interests of both our religious and civil establishments, the Bishop here likewise carefully took his ground on the preamble, which declared that the Protestant succession, and the Protestant Episcopal Church of England and Ireland, are established permanently and inviolably. Proceeding thence to the main question, which he stated to be, "On what grounds "are Roman Catholics excluded from certain privi-"leges and favours granted to other members of "the community?" he at once answered, freely and boldly, (though distinctly denying the slightest intention to give offence,) not for their religious errors or corruptions, but because they are "Papists;" advocates, i. e., of the Pope's arrogated supremacy, and authority over the whole Christian Church. This supreme authority, anciently claimed and exercised without any limit or exception, may (the Bishop admitted) have become apparently obsolete, as to temporal matters, since the Reformation; nevertheless, it is maintained by the decrees of the Council of Trent, and so is ready again to be put in

force, should a convenient opportunity arrive. Setting this, however, aside, the Pope's spiritual supremacy, still openly asserted by the Roman Catholics, unavoidably affects temporal interests, and interferes with the legitimate powers of the State. In the Bishop's opinion, there could be no fallacy more palpable, than that which regards spiritual authority as altogether unconnected with temporal: to adopt an illustration of Bellarmine—"Like the "soul and body, though each have special qualities, "and special interests of its own, yet they act one "upon the other by mutual cooperation, and affect "each other by mutual influence." Hereupon the Bishop defined in a very clear and masterly manner, chiefly by referring to a speech of Bp. Horsley, and to the 37th Article of the Church, the proper limits of the ecclesiastical and civil power in these realms; laying down the true distinction to be, "that spiritual *functions* belong exclusively to the "Church; spiritual *jurisdiction*, to the State, as "allied to the Church:" from which he inferred, "If spiritual jurisdiction or authority, in whatever "degree, be acknowledged as the right of some "other Potentate, that, whether it be more or less, "is so much subtracted from the supreme authority "claimed, and justly claimed, by the Head of the "State; and the subject who is placed in such a "predicament, can pay only a divided allegiance to "his rightful Sovereign; an allegiance which, how-"ever sincere and faithful, as far as it extends, is "avowedly imperfect in this respect; and, conse-"quently, curtails his right to the same favour and

"privileges, the same degree of trust and power, "which others may enjoy, who submit to the State "without any such reservations, or restrictions." In confirmation of this, Bellarmine, a confessedly moderate Roman Catholic, was farther cited; who "taught—"that the Pope, as Pope, has not, di-"rectly and immediately, any temporal, but only a "spiritual power; nevertheless, that, by reason of "the spiritual, he has, at least indirectly, a certain "power, and that *supreme, in temporals:*"—"that "the power of the Pope is, indeed, properly, in itself, "and directly, spiritual; but that by it he can dis-"pose of the temporal things of all Christians, when "that is required for the end of the spiritual power:" and again, "The spiritual power does not mix itself "in temporal concerns, so long as they do not op-"pose the spiritual end, or be not necessary to ob-"tain it; but if any thing of this sort occurs, *the "spiritual can and ought to coerce the temporal,* "by any way or means which shall seem necessary "for its purpose:" doctrines these, which may be left without a comment. Consequently, a number of illustrious English writers were adduced—men whom the advocates for the measure would allow to have been friends of toleration—as having contended, in their day, that the Papists, by dividing their allegiance, rendered themselves absolutely unfit for places of trust and power in the State. Archbishops Wake and Tillotson, Bishops Burnet and Gibson, and even Hoadley, and, moreover, Dr. Sykes and Locke, were all decidedly of this opinion. Regarding more immediately the present condition of

Popery, the Bishop denied it to have undergone a change, or any really important modification. The Papists themselves would not admit that it had, but would uphold it entire as ever. With respect to the oath of allegiance, he supposed them (as declared by Dr. Doyle) to reason thus: "The State "knows our obligations to the Pope; it knows that "we owe him implicit obedience on certain points; "it knows that we regard this as an obligation pa-"ramount to all others; and therefore it cannot "accuse us of mental or secret reservation in taking "the oath under such a restriction. The reserva-"tion is open and avowed; and if the Legislature "think fit to accept these our *conditional* protesta-"tions of fidelity and submission, there can be no "misunderstanding on either side." This, in short, appears to mean, that Roman Catholics in all cases save the authority of the Pope, as Protestants save the authority of God. "Can it be doubtful," then, the Bishop asked, "what in prudence, and due re-"gard to the public safety, ought to be the conduct "of the Legislature towards such persons? Can "their admissibility to the same power and trust "with other subjects, be reasonably claimed, or "safely granted?" Some collateral topics are subsequently touched upon in passing, and the subject is concluded in a manner to which only the Bishop's own words can do justice:—"My Lords, in "making these observations, let me once more dis-"claim any sentiments of ill-will, any hostile or "unchristian feelings towards those who are the "objects of them. If I know myself, I am not of

"an intolerant spirit; and it is painful to me to
"seem opposed to a body of men whom I know
"how to respect, and to esteem. In the early part
"of my professional life, I lived in habits of social
"and friendly intercourse with persons of distinc-
"tion among them, for whom I entertained a sin-
"cere regard. With others of the same description
"I have since cultivated acquaintance, and hope
"still to continue doing so. The best foundation
"of unaffected good-will between parties differing
"in religion, is, in my opinion, an honest and in-
"genuous avowal of such difference, without com-
"promising our own principles, or being intolerant
"of those of others. One more observation, my
"Lords, I cannot forbear to offer. The declared
"object of the proposed measure is to conciliate the
"Roman Catholics. Supposing it to have that ef-
"fect, which appears to me exceedingly doubtful,
"what are likely to be the feelings of our Protest-
"ant fellow-subjects? What can be expected, but a
"revival of those protracted and acrimonious con-
"troversies, which, from the Restoration to the Re-
"volution, so vehemently agitated the public mind?
"A struggle might probably ensue; and not only
"would it, under such circumstances, be the natural
"inclination of the Clergy of our Establishment,
"but it would become their bounden duty, to press
"forward in vindication of their own spiritual rights
"and liberties, and those of the Laity committed to
"their charge. I have no fear, my Lords, of the
"issue of such a struggle. When I look around
"me, and see the daily increasing phalanx of able

"and learned defenders of our Church, I cannot "doubt of a favourable result. Nevertheless, I must "deprecate any course of proceeding which may "render such a conflict necessary. I am too con-"versant with polemics, not to know that these "contests unavoidably engender strife, and enmity, "and bitterness, of which no one can foresee the "termination."

Had wisdom been suffered to prevail, the measure thus argued against would have been no more urged. Urged, however, it was, year by year continually, and not decidedly rejected by the Government, until the petitioners were turned into threatening claimants; and during the autumn of 1828, it became generally understood that the King's ministers would themselves introduce, and carry through, a Relief Bill, during the next session of Parliament. Upon this, the Bishop of Durham felt himself obliged to stand in the painful situation of an opponent to the existing Government. In conversing on the subject with the present Writer, he declared that he had earnestly (but in vain) been reconsidering it, in order to find a safe way of accommodation; and his spirit, throughout the transaction, though strongly excited, and sorely wounded, by some unexpected instances of defection, appears to have contracted none of the bitterness of resentment. One of his letters with a view to it has been already inserted: as the time of trial drew on, he also wrote from his town residence (Jan. 21, 1829)—"Nothing is talked "of but Ireland and the Papists; and every one is "anxious to know the intentions of the Cabinet,

"which as yet do not transpire. It is hailed as a "good symptom for the Protestant cause, that the "Duke of Northumberland is actually appointed "Lord Lieutenant. My own views are simple "enough. Only keep the Papists out of Parlia- "ment, and I care little what else is done for them. "But once bring them into Parliament, and what "security will there be for our securities, be they "what they may? 'Quis custodiat custodes?'"

This the Bishop subsequently insisted on more at length, in his speeches during the discussion of the Bill. The substance of those speeches, though not published, was printed, and circulated by the Author amongst his connexions and friends; and there is much in them worthy still to be recollected. After expressing his pain of mind at the position in which he found himself placed, and avowing that not by the most sincere endeavours, could he regard the present measure in any other light than as fraught with danger to the most vital interests of the community, and noticing the still ulterior measures professedly intended by its advocates, he again shortly alleged the spiritual allegiance of the Roman Catholics to the Papal Power, (involving an allegiance in civil matters also,) as an objection which had by no means been removed. Then he stood on the settlement of the Constitution in and about 1688, strongly arguing, that it ought not to be changed, or violated for mere expediency, as it would be by the admission of Roman Catholics into the Legislature; that, in case of their being once admitted, they might probably gather a party sufficiently powerful to

abolish all securities; and that, under such circumstances, either our Protestant liberties must be surrendered, or the King must have recourse, in defence of them, to irresponsible and unconstitutional measures, to Acts of Government independent of his advisers. Then he admirably vindicated the middle classes of the people of England, (petitioners, without number, against the Bill,) and especially the Clergy, from the contempt and obloquy which had most illiberally been cast on them by its advocates; and, by referring only to auricular confession, most triumphantly exposed the wilful falsehood, or pitiful ignorance of the assertion, that the spirit of domination is now more characteristic of the Church of England, than of the Church of Rome; shewing the former to have no power at all over those who choose not to admit it; but the latter to be essentially a despotic system, irreconcilable with either civil or religious freedom: and upon that he concluded, in a manner well befitting a Protestant Bishop, as follows: "But, my Lords, higher consider-
" ations than those I have yet mentioned, actuate
" me on the present occasion. I confess, I cannot
" separate such a question as this from the *religious*
" impressions that weigh upon my mind: I cannot
" forget, that, at your Lordships' table, I have made
" certain declarations, and taken certain oaths, to
" qualify me for a seat in this House, in which I
" have solemnly recorded my opinion, that the Ro-
" man Catholic religion is idolatrous and superstitious: and having declared this truly and sincerely, I cannot but believe that such a religion is

" offensive to Almighty God. Convinced, too, as I " am, (and that upon no light or superficial grounds, " but after many years of studious consideration and " inquiry,) that the religion of Popery is distinctly " and awfully pointed out in Scripture, as the one " great apostasy from the truth, the declared object " of Divine displeasure, I feel that I should not be " discharging the duty I owe to a far higher tri- " bunal than your Lordships', if I assented to any " thing which I believed to have a tendency to " strengthen or uphold such a corrupt and errone- " ous system. I do not mean, my Lords, to judge " others in this respect; it is enough for me to say, " that I cannot conscientiously act otherwise than I " am now doing. I feel that I dare not, on any " grounds of supposed political necessity, or expe- " diency, do that which I cannot but regard inju- " rious to that pure religion, and to those highest " interests of the community, which have hitherto, " under the Divine blessing, mainly contributed to " our national prosperity and greatness. I dare not " be instrumental in uniting Popery with Protest- " antism, nor in destroying or weakening the dis- " tinction between idolatrous superstition, and the " pure worship of God in spirit and in truth."

Bp. Van Mildert's second speech on this occasion, begins with a statement which may well stand in connexion with the concluding sentiments (above cited) of his first; although it was designed chiefly to remove a misapprehension of somewhat which had been advanced by the Earl of Eldon. "My " Lords," he remarked, "a subtle kind of distinction

" has been made between the terms idolatry and
" idolatrous, superstition and superstitious. The
" distinction between any act itself and the person
" who commits such act, is intelligible enough; but
" how the distinction bears upon the present sub-
" ject, I am unable to perceive. An idolatrous prac-
" tice I have always understood to be idolatry, and
" a superstitious practice, superstition; and I con-
" ceive, that a Church which admits and enjoins
" any such practices, may be justly termed an idol-
" atrous and a superstitious Church. But it does
" not hence follow, nor did I understand the noble
" and learned Earl to say, or to mean, that the
" Romish Church is altogether idolatrous or super-
" stitious, or that it is an entire mass of idolatry
" and superstition. No intelligent person can be
" imagined to hold such an opinion of the Church
" of Rome, or to intend so to describe it. Although
" we ourselves undoubtedly regard the adoration of
" the Host as idolatrous, and the invocation of saints
" as superstitious, and, accordingly, so characterise
" the Church which upholds those practices; yet
" the charge can never fairly be construed to extend
" to the whole of its Creed or Ritual. As to what
" has been said with respect to the Church of Rome
" being a true Church, there can be no doubt that
" it is so, although it be a corrupt one; and it is
" equally certain, that the Protestant Church of
" England has derived its spiritual and ministerial
" powers through the channel of the Church of
" Rome. But it owes no obligations to the Church
" of Rome for the pure doctrine and worship it now

" professes, those being of much older date than " Popery itself. Strange misapprehensions, how- " ever, seem to prevail upon this point; and many " speak of Protestantism, as if it were entirely the " offspring of Popery, and indebted to it for its very " existence. The *term* Protestantism is, undoubt- " edly, of modern date; because, until there was " something to protest against, the word Protest- " antism could have no meaning. But the *thing* " itself, the *religion* of Protestantism, existed long " before Popery was known, or heard of. In fact, " Popery itself was an innovation upon the primi- " tive faith; Protestantism is the *revival* of that " faith in its unadulterated state."—The remainder of this speech is occupied with strictures, not a little acute and forcible, on the oaths designed respectively for Roman Catholics and Protestants, by the Bill under consideration.

The third speech is on the clause against the assumption of titles and dignities by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in Ireland, which the Bishop could decidedly foresee would be ineffectual, as professing " only to prevent the open avowal of those " titles, without attempting to remove the root of " the evil itself." Thence he exposed what the root of the evil really is, viz. " That the Irish Roman " Catholic Hierarchy runs *pari passu*, in every point, " with the established Protestant Church; that there " is Bishop for Bishop, Dean for Dean, Archdeacon " for Archdeacon, and Incumbent for Incumbent, in " every See and parish;" the Roman Catholic, in every case, holding and alleging the Protestant to

be an usurper. And with a view to this system—
" a system so completely organized and constructed,
" that, whenever the opportunity may arrive, no-
" thing would be wanting but a single stroke of the
" pen, to transfer the whole of the existing Esta-
" blishment from the Protestant to the Popish Cler-
" gy"—he begged to ask, " whether, to prevent such
" consequences, something more may not be requi-
" site than merely prohibiting the public assumption
" of these titles;" and suggested, that " no reason-
" able objection could be made to placing the Rom-
" ish Clergy in Ireland upon the same footing with
" those in England, where no such offensive pre-
" tensions are alleged; but their Bishops exercise
" their episcopal functions under the denomination
" of Vicars Apostolic, invested only with a sort of
" missionary authority from the Pope: their Clergy,
" also, are simply denominated Ministers of Congre-
" gations, and lay no claim to the authority of Pa-
" rochial Clergy." To this, too, the Bishop called attention, as to a strong example of the interference of the Pope's spiritual power with temporal concerns; supposing it undeniable, " that upon the ge-
" neral principles of civil and ecclesiastical polity,
" and more especially upon those which are dis-
" tinctly recognised in the constitution of this united
" kingdom, the whole assortment of Dioceses and
" parishes, and all the regulations connected with
" it, are matters of secular concern, directly belong-
" ing to the State, and necessarily subject to the
" control of the Government and Legislature of the
" country;" and pointing out, that by his assump-

tion of such power in Ireland, and not (for the present) in England, the Pope was evidently claiming the former country as his own already. Whereupon he closed with declaring—"As long as that evil is "permitted to continue, all securities against the "danger to be apprehended to the Protestant Esta-"blishment in Ireland from the present measure, "appear to me to be ineffectual."

Such an array (here very imperfectly described) of unanswerable arguments and representations, was not, one may hope, entirely useless, because it failed of its immediate object. Surely, the reasons thus alleged, are fit to be of important service in every stage of the existing conflict; and with this idea the present opportunity has been taken to reproduce[a], or set them again in view. Sooner, probably, than the Bishop then imagined, the worst which he foretold is coming to pass. The predicted evils, having begun almost immediately, are daily thickening; insomuch that what was fondly expected, by those who framed and enacted it, to bring peace, seems on the point of bringing irreconcilable war; except Englishmen will rather basely consent to abandon

[a] It seems proper here to note, as another (subordinate) motive for reproducing them, that the Gentleman's Magazine, in its Obituary of the late Bishop, stated him to have changed his sentiments on the Roman Catholic Question, in compliance with the Minister of the day; and that the Editor, on being apprised of such a flagrant error, thought fit to insert his acknowledgment of it only amongst his "Minor Correspondence," which is probably passed over by the greater number of his readers. Also, a book called the "The Georgian Æra" utters the same inexcusable mistake.

their Protestant Faith, and its institutions. There might have been war *then*, had the deprecated concession been refused. The crisis, no doubt, had been long in preparation: from the day when it was found impossible to form a decidedly Protestant administration, Protestant interests were in the way to be sacrificed, or to be upheld by a convulsive struggle. At the time of passing the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill, the former of these alternatives was preferred. Yet a little while, and (as every one may perceive) the ruling powers will have again to choose between them; or, it may be, the people of England will take heart, and choose for themselves, seeing the matter to be palpably one of self-defence. Statesmen have too long imagined, with respect to religious controversies and distractions,

> Hi motus animorum atque hæc certamina tanta
> Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescunt.

Daily, however, is it becoming more evident that they are not so easily to be composed. Through the want of a firm control, occasioned by the weakness of successive Governments, Popery and Protestantism cannot much longer subsist together. Of the *result* of the conflict there can be no fear, though many, who should have been for us, are shamefully taking the contrary part: nor is it to be doubted, that the whole procedure will be made conducive, by Divine Providence, to the advancement, and final establishment, of the truth: yet the intervening prospect, it must be confessed, is an unhappy one, teeming with visions of perplexity and trouble.

At the close of this distressing business, the Bishop thus expressed himself: "You may imagine "how I have been harrassed both in mind and body, "and how sorely I have been grieved, during the "course of it. I am now endeavouring to recover "myself, as well as I can. What is done, is done "irrevocably. What may follow, is still in a great "degree hidden. But we must not slumber at our "posts, nor be lulled into a treacherous security. "Agitation and indiscreet zeal may do harm, but "apathy would be certain ruin. The union of the "serpent and the dove never was more needful than "at the present moment. The thought of the dove, "however, tempts me to cry out, 'O that I had "wings like a dove; for then would I flee away, "and be at rest.'"

Of the Bishop's proceedings nearer home, or in his Diocese, during the summer and autumn which followed the above transaction, there is this summary in a letter dated Auckland Castle, August 31, 1829: "The bustle of public days here, of the As-"sizes, and of company staying with us, have left "me but little time at my command. The day "after to-morrow I set out for Newcastle, where I "am to preach for the sons of the Clergy on Thurs-"day, and to hold a Confirmation on Friday. On "my return, I am also to preach at Durham Cathe-"dral on Sunday, and to confirm on Monday. An "Ordination is fixed for the Sunday after Michael-"mas. Afterwards, I expect to have two or three "Consecrations, which will probably close my *pub-"lic* labours for this season."

Accordingly, on September the 3rd, he preached at Newcastle, for the charitable Institution named in the foregoing extract, and subsequently was induced to publish his sermon, which is reprinted in the subjoined collection. It had been very long, until the present instance, since a Bishop had preached at Newcastle. The novelty, therefore, of the thing, added to the high reputation of the Preacher, drew together an unusually large and respectable auditory; upon whom, it may be hoped that the becoming counsels which he uttered, as to the regard due from the Laity to the Clergy, produced a suitable effect.

About the beginning of the year 1830, Bishop Van Mildert experienced the first attack of a painful inward complaint, which afflicted him, more or less, almost continually during the remainder of his life. Not long after the opening of the parliamentary session, he had been appointed a member of an ecclesiastical commission, for the reform of the spiritual courts; and a matter having been suggested to him in that capacity, he had to return the following answer, dated Merton Grove, May 11, 1830: "I should be very glad, if it were in my power, to "attend personally at the Board of Ecclesiastical "Commissioners, and bring the grievance you men-"tion under their notice. But I have now for "nearly three months been disabled from all public "business, and precluded almost from private so-"ciety, by a distressing malady, for which I am "still under surgical care, and am strictly enjoined "as much cessation as possible from exertion, and

"excitement of every kind. Accordingly, I am now "passing a short time at this pleasant retreat, a few "miles from London, most kindly lent to me for "that purpose, by my excellent friend Mr. Justice "Park: and though my progress towards recovery "is very slow indeed, I am assured, that, in course "of time, I may hope to be restored to a firmer "state of health; and this I am willing to believe." And a month afterwards, June 12, he farther wrote —"We have now left our country retreat at Mer-"ton, and are here (in London) for a few days, pre-"paratory to setting out on our journey northward. "Some progress, I trust, has been made towards "the removal of my complaint, though still there "are fluctuations, and probably much longer time "may be requisite to complete the recovery. My "surgeon, however, thinks I may venture upon the "journey by easy stages, so far as my own horses "will convey me daily: and should it please God "that I get through it without injury, I am willing "to hope that the air of the North, and the seclu-"sion from public display, (which I shall rigidly "adhere to during the summer and autumn,) may "do much for me. We purpose stopping two or "three weeks at Harrogate, and probably shall not "reach Auckland before the middle of July." Accordingly, he left London, on his journey northward, about the end of June; and in a subsequent letter (dated Harrogate, July 9th) describes himself to have reached thus far tolerably well, and to be hoping for an improvement of his health.

The summer and autumn of this year appear to

have been passed by him (as he proposed) in retirement. By the 22nd of December, he had again removed to the vicinity of London, having taken a house at Roehampton, with a view to escape, in some degree, from the constant calls upon him of public business. But he was often almost obliged to pass some days in Hanover Square; and, besides this, the correspondence respecting his Diocese, and other matters, which pressed upon him, was so unremitting, and of such a weighty description, that he could nowhere find the repose which was pronounced by his medical attendants indispensable to a recovery of his health.

Nor had the summer and autumn preceding, though passed in comparative seclusion, been unoccupied. The Bishop had seized that opportunity to comply with the entreaties of several of his most valued friends, by revising for the press a selection from the discourses which he had preached at Lincoln's Inn. Consequently, at the beginning of the following year, 1831, two volumes were presented by him to the public. Of these, it is much, yet not too much, to say, that they were worthy, in all respects, of the Author's high reputation, and of the audience to whom they were addressed. Each volume contains twenty-five sermons; those in the first, are chiefly doctrinal, and arranged in a certain series, but not so as that (except in a few cases) any one is incomplete without another; those in the second, are more of a practical and miscellaneous cast, yet equally marked by a sound wisdom and discrimination. The whole number are admirably

adapted to the mental tastes and habits of the congregation for whom they were designed. A more acute and discriminating body of hearers, than that which frequents the chapel of Lincoln's Inn, is probably nowhere to be met with. So accustomed are they to severe discussion and disputation, that, with the best intention of heart to receive and profit by religious instruction, they cannot but require "strong "meat" for their satisfaction; nor can they easily avoid detecting and stumbling at every imperfect or undigested argument; every excess or inaccuracy of statement; every merely impassioned appeal, involving a substitution of fine imagery for reasoning. Under an abiding sense of this, the contents of these volumes appear to have been carefully selected, and composed. Certainly it could require no special effort, no extraordinary care, in such an one as the Author had previously shewn himself, to provide sound speech and exposition, beyond the power of any acuteness to contravene; and, accordingly, he exhibits throughout his wonted freedom and simplicity of style. Still, while superior to the stiffness of caution, he may be seen to have generally remembered what class and manner of persons were to be persuaded. His first sermon, on the text, "What "is truth?" and the three which almost immediately follow, on "Foolish and unlearned questions" in religion, were most evidently prepared with this impression; also the nineteenth sermon of the second volume, "On the Christian use of worldly oc- "cupations." Notwithstanding, however, such an evident regard to the peculiar turn, and practised

intellect of his audience, there is nothing in the above-mentioned, or any other of the sermons under review, less adapted to every man of understanding, who is disposed to exercise his mind in such matters. Of all it may be said, that they are marked by an excellent judgment, and by a refrained, rather than an affected fervency of spirit. If it be desirable to specify, or draw comparisons, the three triads succeeding those which have been spoken of, which are, "On man's primeval, fallen, and regene-" rate state;" "On the design, the fulfilment, and " the cessation of the Jewish Law;" and "On our " Lord's character as a Teacher, as a Pattern of in-" nocence, and as a Pattern of good works"—may, perhaps, be represented as the most remarkable. In so judicious and interesting a manner are these important subjects treated, that none can read them without gratification and advantage. They appear to have been occupying the Author's attention long before, having been previously set down in his common-place book; and it is much to be regretted, that others, which are there likewise set down, were left, for want of opportunity, unexecuted. To mention one of these in passing, of a deeply awful and momentous cast; the subject proposed is Sin, in four sermons; the first, to declare "The *nature* of " sin, its *heinousness*, and its *indelibility*," 1 John iii. 4; the second, "The *personal* effects of sin in "*this* life," Numb. xxxii. 23; the third, "The effects " of sin in a man's *posterity*," Exod. xx. 5; the fourth, " The *final effects* of sin," Rom. vi. 21.

Respecting the unconnected sermons contained in

these volumes, each one, during the time that it is read, may well be esteemed the most excellent, and worthy of the most cordial approbation. Yet the Writer cannot refrain from here singling out, in the first volume, the sixteenth, "On Christ our Right-"eousness;" and the twenty-second, entitled "Our "Sanctification progressive;" and in the second volume, the first, the sixth, the eighth, and all from the fifteenth to the twenty-third inclusive, — as highly deserving to be again and again perused. In that, "Our Sanctification progressive," there occurs a fine passage touching Baptismal Regeneration, which, if it fail to convince, can hardly provoke unfriendly animadversion; and in the first sermon of the second volume, which is "Against being "ashamed of Christianity," is to be found a description or commendation of the Gospel, conceived and uttered in such an animating strain, as must cause the heart of every unsophisticated reader to burn or glow within him. Both these passages, however, are longer than can properly be transcribed entire into the present Memoir; and to abridge, would be to do them an injustice. Considering, too, that they are already before the public eye, a manuscript note of the Author's, hitherto not printed, will probably be esteemed more valuable by the reader. This note is on a sentence beginning at line 3, page 72, of the second volume, which says, with reference to our Lord's temptation, "He who "afterwards fed a multitude of five thousand by the "power of His word, could doubtless have supplied "his own wants, on this occasion, by a similar

"exercise of the Divine energy within Him." Hereupon the Bishop has farther written, "It is objected, "that this seems to do away with the temptation; "that it is not clear that our Lord then had that "power, nor that, if *in all points He was tempted* "*like as we are*, He might not doubt that God "would prevent his perishing by hunger." Answer —"Whether or not our Lord had at that juncture "the power of working such a miracle, (which, I "think, from the context can hardly be doubted,) "the force of the temptation consisted in the unfit-"ness of exercising His power for such a purpose. "He could not do so without betraying a direct "mistrust of the Divine support, and (as the ob-"jection implies) doing away with the temptation "itself. The temptation, I conceive, was strong to "exercise this power; and His refusing to exercise "it, was the triumph of duty and submission, in "His human character, over the most urgent in-"ducements to a contrary conduct. I do not see, "therefore, that His supposed power of working "the miracle, materially alters the case as an ex-"ample to ourselves. The difference between not "being able to work the miracle, and refusing to "work it, does not seem to render our Lord, in this "instance, a less apposite pattern for us to follow. "By merely foregoing the use of His power, He "voluntarily placed Himself in the same predica-"ment as any human being, who has no such "power."

The production of these volumes was hailed by several of the Bishop's friends with strong ex-

pressions of approbation and delight. A Clergyman of high theological learning, still living, who *certainly* is not to be suspected of flattery, declared—"So far as my own reading extends, no "such collection of sermons has appeared since the "well-known publication of Bp. Horsley. I mean "not to say that there is any resemblance between "the two collections; quite the reverse. Each col-"lection alike shews, indeed, the hand of a master; "but characteristically each is strictly *sui generis*, "and stands perfectly distinct from the other. In "the virtue of virtues, *clearness and perspicuity*, "your sermons strike me as decidedly superior; "and, additionally to this cardinal virtue, you have "certainly solved a difficulty of no very easy solu-"tion; I mean, *the attainment of genuine origin-"ality, without the ambitious vice of affected, and "generally mischievous, innovation*." These evidently are more than sentences of course, such as a copy presented might require. But the following, from an aged Dignitary of the Church, (himself too an author,) since deceased, must have been, to such a mind as the Author's, decidedly the most gratifying and affecting:—

"My Lord,

"I have been reading very attentively your Lord-"ship's sermons, preached many years ago to the "society at Lincoln's Inn, and now given to the pub-"lic. I had not proceeded far, before I felt a desire "to express my thanks to the Writer for the benefit "I was deriving from the publication; and this de-"sire increased with the perusal of every sermon,

" till, at the last, I found it so difficult to be restrain-
" ed, that I have rashly ventured upon a breach of
" decorum, in addressing this to your Lordship. I
" must rest my apology chiefly upon my overpower-
" ing sense of the superior excellence and usefulness
" of the work. I do not know any other that I can
" compare with it, as exhibiting the Christian reli-
" gion in its truth and purity, and its heavenly
" superiority to all other systems, by proofs most
" copious and applicable, and by arguments unan-
" swerable; guarding it at the same time from er-
" rors and abuses, and pointing out that path of
" golden mean, which, apart from all corrupt ex-
" tremes on the right hand and on the left, leads
" directly to happiness, temporal and eternal. I
" forbear to say more, considering to whom I am
" now speaking; but much more, in particular, I
" have to say, when I recommend it to the younger
" Clergy, for whose use it is invaluable, and little
" less so for all orders of persons, in the present and
" succeeding times. If more apology be necessary
" for the liberty I now take, your Lordship will be
" so kind as to consider and indulge me as an old
" servant in the Church. It has been observed, that
" the coldness of age is sometimes accompanied by a
" warmth of heart. This I feel, when the interests
" of religion are concerned.—I have the honour to
" be, &c. &c."

It were impossible by any additional notices to corroborate the cool discrimination of the first, or to increase the beauty and effect of the last of these spontaneous testimonies. Taken together they may

be said to constitute the most satisfactory human commendation.

In the spring of this year, the original Reform Bill was introduced, and the Parliament which rejected it, dissolved. Bp. Van Mildert continued in London only long enough to take his seat in the new Parliament; and then again journeyed slowly towards the North, making some stay (as in the preceding year) at Harrogate. With a view to this, he wrote, June 10, 1831—"My complaint (though, "I trust, abating) still forbids any such exertion as "my numerous calls require; and I begin to be "impatient for departure, were it only to run away "from incessant occupation. We purpose, *Deo vo-* "*lente*, to start on Thursday next; to travel, with "my own horses, by easy stages; to stop at Har- "rogate two or three weeks; and then fix at Auck- "land for the summer. I project, also, a partial, if "not an entire, Visitation of my Diocese; but that "must depend on such health as God may please to "allow me. These are times in which I cannot "but be anxious to communicate my sentiments "among the Clergy; and in which, indeed, we all "ought to prepare ourselves for such a state of "things as none of us yet have lived to witness. I "pray God they may prove less disastrous than at "present we are warranted in expecting." Pursuant to the design which he thus announced, the Bishop effected a partial Visitation of his Diocese, during the autumn of this year, happily without any serious inconvenience; and having returned to London about the middle of December, could thence

write—"My health still fluctuates, but, I thank "God, is, on the whole, somewhat more favourable "than last year."

His Charge, delivered on the late occasion, was about this time published; and for the dispassionate and able view which it takes of the situation of the Clergy, and of the conduct which, under existing circumstances, would best become them, is a production of more than ordinary value. It begins with just noticing the din of political strife, and its sad hinderance of the labours of the Clergy to promote the spiritual interests of the community. Previously, however, to offering his sentiments on such a state of affairs, the Bishop adverts to the local concerns of his Diocese. Here (if nowhere else) he could happily see reason for congratulation. A spirit of improvement had been generally shewn; and specially as to the points which on the former occasion he had brought forward, his wishes had been met with a becoming alacrity and zeal. Parochial schools, glebe houses, and churches had, in various places, been multiplied and enlarged; several parishes had been divided, for the better performance in them of clerical duties; and the societies in aid of the Church were working well. Still there was to be lamented a great, and even an increasing want, in the mining districts, of places of worship in communion with the Established Church; respecting which he suggests, in passing, the expediency of providing, under suitable precautions, auxiliary chapels, or oratories, as the readiest mode of supplying the deficiency. After this, the Bishop proceeds to remark at large,

with a finely-tempered prudence and intrepidity, on the eventful aspect of the times. Glancing a moment at the past, at the repeal of a portion of the Test laws, and the admission of Roman Catholics into the Legislature, he expresses a grateful recollection of the affectionate approbation and regard which, on those occasions, had been expressed towards him by his Clergy; and a sincere regret that his own prognostics of the consequences of those measures were proving true, rather than those of the many who had foretold "halcyon days of con-
"ciliation and harmony, arising from generosity on
"the one side, and gratitude on the other, through-
"out the United Kingdom." But so, undeniably, it was, that the Church's enemies of every description, instead of being disarmed or moderated, had gained strength, and become more rancorous against her: wherefore, danger being imminent, the Clergy should be aware of it, and should be taking an estimate of their supposed imperfections, and means of improvement, in order to form a correct judgment of their actual position, and of the course which, on the whole, they should adopt. Hence the Bishop proceeds to discuss, at some length, the amount of the revenues of the Church (maliciously exaggerated by her adversaries); the unequal distribution of them; the calumnies uttered against the Deans and Chapters of Cathedrals; and the accusations of pluralities and non-residence. On these several topics he says, as it were, "Audi alteram partem," and sets it forth with a truly discriminating judgment. He points out, to the conviction of every reasonable

mind, that none of these anomalies can safely be removed by any instant or sweeping measure, and that, indeed, they are not wholly evils. He adduces facts in vindication of the slandered, and shews that there is no indisposition among the dignified Clergy to a sober reformation, or improvement; two Bills having been brought into Parliament by the Archbishop; the one, to empower patrons, both lay and clerical, to endow, or augment the value of small Cures; and the other, to place the tenure of pluralities under certain wholesome modifications and restrictions. To the same effect, also, he notices the Ecclesiastical Commission appointed the preceding year, with the full concurrence of the Episcopal Bench, for the better correction, or prevention of clerical delinquency. Then, with respect to the foregoing just representation of the Church's actual state, the Bishop, in a noble strain, advises, exhorts, and encourages his hearers (and, it may be said, his readers likewise) to be discreet and vigilant, firm and active, courageous and hopeful, in their posts of duty, as becometh true soldiers and servants of a Master who is greater than all that are in the world; and concludes with bidding them remember, that, while they endeavour, through God's grace, to promote His honour and glory, to spread the knowledge of His truth, to hold fast by His promises, to fulfil His will, to turn many to righteousness, and thus to advance His kingdom on the earth, their labour shall not be in vain: for just and true is He who hath said, "Be thou faithful unto death, "and I will give thee a crown of life."

The above is but an imperfect account of a production which has lost scarcely any of its interest by the few years that have since elapsed. Our condition being still nearly what it then was, the corresponding sentiments and duties are still required. And the whole composition breathes a temper and spirit which must appear always worthy of approbation. It is adapted, in almost every sentence, at once to allay heat, and to enliven zeal. It stigmatizes the malignant with a dignified moderation, counsels the erring, confirms and invigorates the rightminded: it is like the warning voice of a trumpet, giving no uncertain sound that enemies are at hand, yet uttering not a single note of unseemly defiance or provocation.

In January 1832, writing from Hanover Square, the Bishop says, "My labours and anxieties increase "in every direction, and almost in the inverse ratio "of my means of encountering them. My resources "of every kind are running out fearfully, while the "demands upon them are multiplying beyond de-"scription. I fully expect to break down, my health "being still very fluctuating, and a day seldom pass-"ing without a memento, that, though the spirit "may be willing, the flesh is weak. But while any "powers, physical or mental, remain to me, it is "my duty to spend and be spent in the work of my "calling."

In the following April, he twice felt it incumbent on him to make his voice heard in the House of Lords. The first time, he rose, in a debate on the Plurality of Benefices Bill, merely to contradict a

number of gross misstatements, which had been published in a widely-circulated paper, respecting certain Church Dignitaries and Clergy, belonging to, or connected with his Diocese. Having done this, he concluded with declaring, "With respect to plu-
" ralities in general, I believe there are fewer of
" them, in proportion, in the Diocese of Durham,
" than in any other. I have never yet given a Liv-
" ing in plurality in the Diocese, nor intend to do
" so. And I may also say of my Clergy in general,
" that they are a valuable body of men, attentive to
" their duties, and ready to adopt any improvement
" that may be recommended."

The second time that the Bishop of Durham saw fit to speak, was a few days after, on the Reform Bill; chiefly to state the reasons by which he was determined to give his vote in opposition to the Government. The reasons which he offered were—that (allowing some reform to be indispensable) the measure then insisted on was adapted to satisfy neither of the two strongest parties in the State; that no great practical evil would be removed by it, nor any great practical good obtained; that it would go dangerously to abolish prescriptive rights and privileges, to weaken the executive Government, the Aristocracy, and eventually the Monarchy itself; that it would tend to deteriorate the character of the House of Commons, and, at the same time, to increase its power; and that it would have the effect of substituting for what were reproachfully called nomination boroughs, political-union boroughs, under an influence far more dangerous and degrading

than any which aforetime had been exerted. The justice of these objections, evidently arising from a suitable regard to the morality and religion of the country, has been extensively proved by the result. In the course of explaining them, the Bishop emphatically remarks, "My Lords, we have been admonished to look to the signs of the times, and I take the advice in good part; it is wholesome and good advice, though, so far as I myself am concerned, it may be superfluous. I have looked to the signs of the times; I have viewed them with great attention, and great anxiety; and I think it impossible not to discern in them much to create apprehension and uneasiness. Among other signs of the times, there is a spirit of insubordination, and of general restlessness abroad; a disposition in favour of innovation; a sort of rooted antipathy to ancient establishments, merely because they are ancient; and a desire to make rulers subjects, and subjects rulers; to make the constituted authorities of Government subservient to the will of the people. I see all this; and I also see that, in my opinion, this Bill will tend to increase these propensities, and to extend them." Again he observes, "Atheism and infidelity, dissent and discord, all those feelings and passions which tend to demoralize the minds of men, everywhere abound; and I cannot but fear that all these will be increased by the operation of this Bill. But we are told, that this very condition of society renders the measure necessary. That some change may have become necessary, I do not dispute. The

"people, it is urged, are placed in a different situa-
"tion by the progress of knowledge, and by what
"is called 'the march of intellect.' Unquestion-
"ably 'knowledge is power;' but, unless it be un-
"der the control of some higher principle, it will
"be the power of evil, rather than of good. It is,
"therefore, the duty of Statesmen to guide and con-
"trol public opinion, not implicitly to follow it, or
"to yield to popular clamour. The power, also,
"which knowledge bestows, is not always in pro-
"portion to its real value. The most superficial
"knowledge, by setting a man somewhat above his
"compeers in society, will give him an ascendancy
"over them, which his superiors in station, though
"superior also in knowledge, will not be able to
"maintain." And, to give one more extract, replying, in conclusion, to the accusation which had been urged against the Bishops, in particular, of a wish to curtail the liberties of the people, he protests,
"My Lords, these are most unjustifiable aspersions,
"and I repel them with indignation. If I could
"conceive that the lower orders would be benefited
"by this Bill, it would go far to remove my objec-
"tions to it, and induce me to give it my support.
"But I have yet to learn what advantage they can
"derive from it. I have yet to learn how it can
"advance the poor man's interest, how it can add to
"the real happiness of the peasant or the artificer,
"to take him from the field or the loom, for the
"purpose of associating with political unions, and
"dictating measures to the Government. We have
"been threatened, however, with the dangers of

" rejecting this Bill; dangers which I do not affect
" to deny. Nevertheless, when I compare them with
" the probable consequences of passing it, I am much
" more prepared to encounter the former than the
" latter. In every point of view, I am much more
" disposed to share the danger of rejecting this mea-
" sure, than the danger of acceding to it; because I
" think that the one is much less likely to be per-
" manent and irreparable than the other."

On his return to the North, after these anxieties, the Bishop was able to attend the Assizes at Durham, and could thence write, (July 31, 1832,) " I
" have reason to be thankful that the returns of my
" malady do not entirely disqualify me for public
" service, at a period when no post in the Church
" can or ought to be a *sinecure*, whilst there are
" any faculties remaining."

The Ecclesiastical Commission had been lately revived. Respecting that, and a Bill mentioned in his Charge, as a measure of improvement brought forward spontaneously by the Heads of the Church, he says, in a letter dated Aug. 9, 1832, " What may
" result from the newly-constituted Ecclesiastical
" Commission, it were in vain yet to anticipate;
" nor do I know much of its proceedings, though a
" member of it, having left London just after its
" appointment. Meanwhile, I intend to put in ope-
" ration the late Bill of the Archbishop's, for the
" augmentation of small Benefices, as far as relates
" to the episcopal patronage of this See. The Dean
" and Chapter of Durham are setting an excellent
" example in this respect. Had this been done

"thirty or forty years ago, the Church might have "escaped much obloquy. But without such a Bill "as the Archbishop's, it could not have been done "effectually. I got through the Assize week at "Durham tolerably well, though not without some "distressing sensations. I am now pledged for three "public days here," (at Auckland,) "in this week "and next, which, too probably, may occasion a re-"lapse. The remaining duties of this season will "be less onerous, and may, if necessary, be done by "proxy."

We now come, in order of time, to the foundation of the University of Durham; an account of which, as kindly communicated by a member of that Chapter, is here inserted without alteration or comment.

"In the early part of the summer of 1831, the "project of the Durham University, for the advance-"ment of learning, engaged the principal attention "of the Bishop. About this time, his Lordship "put himself into communication with the Dean of "Durham, and other members of the Chapter, as "well as with the Archbishop of Canterbury; and "every thing being ripe for the accomplishment of "this important object, a plan was drawn up by his "desire, and submitted by the Dean to the consi-"deration of the Chapter; and, being approved and "sanctioned by that body, was, in due course of time, "carried into effect, with the concurrence of his "Majesty's Government.

"The Statutes of the Cathedral Church of Dur-"ham enabled the Chapter to do this great work, "and to confer the benefits of an University upon

"the North of England, without any invasion of "the ecclesiastical rights entrusted to their care. "The education of youth, in 'virtue and good lite- "rature,' is declared, in the preamble of the Sta- "tutes, to be one main purpose of the foundation; "and the Dean and Chapter thought, that in en- "larging their system of education, and adapting it "to the exigencies of society, they were only ful- "filling the wise intentions of their Founder; an "opinion in which Bishop Van Mildert fully agreed. "It is necessary to mention this, lest it be supposed "that any sacrifice of principle was made on the "part of the Bishop, by his concurrence in the ap- "propriation of the funds of the Chapter of Durham "to a purpose not strictly ecclesiastical.

"The deep interest taken by the Bishop in the "prospects and success of this new Establishment, "appears in many of his letters, and, among others, "in one of the 10th of August, 1831, addressed to "Archdeacon Thorp, the Warden of the University; "in which he says, 'The excitement occasioned by "the intense interest of the subject now constantly "occupying my thoughts, is more than a broken "constitution like mine will bear; and before our "projects can have taken root, I fear that my feeble "energies will have withered away: but if the cause "thrives, the sacrifice of the remainder of a brief "existence here will have been well made.'

"For the support of the University, the Dean "and Chapter, with the assistance of the Bishop, "procured an Act of Parliament in the succeeding "session, 1832, enabling them to appropriate im-

" mediately an estate of 3000*l.* a year to its use;
" the Bishop, on his part, providing a large sum for
" outfit, and contributing, from his private purse,
" first 1000*l.*, and afterwards 2000*l.* a year, engag-
" ing, at the same time, to settle three stalls upon
" the Warden, and the Professors of Divinity, and
" of Classical Literature. His Lordship's gifts to
" the University, between this period and the time
" of his death, amounted to 10,000*l.* and upwards.
" But the care he bestowed upon the institution,
" the anxious attention he gave to its concerns, and
" the sanction of his great name and authority, was
" of more value than the pecuniary benefits which
" the University derived from his bounty.

" His Lordship lived to see, not only the opening
" of the University for the reception of students, in
" Michaelmas term 1833, but the formation, with
" his concurrence, of a body of Statutes, in 1835,
" under which it is in future to be conducted; the
" government remaining with the Bishop and the
" Dean and Chapter, and the management being
" confided to a Warden, Senate, and Convocation.
" A Scholarship, bearing the name of the Bishop,
" has lately been founded in the University, in ho-
" nour of his memory.

" The interests of learning, and the establishment
" of the new University, did not so occupy the mind
" of the Bishop as to divert it from another import-
" ant object, the augmentation of small parochial
" Cures; and he was mainly instrumental in pre-
" paring and passing the Bill of 1831, which en-
" ables Ecclesiastical Corporations, and others, to

"settle property in perpetuity upon Livings with "which they are connected, being of a less value "than 350*l.* a year. It was his desire to give the "fullest effect, in his own Diocese, to the provisions "of this Act; and a scheme was prepared, and after-"wards enlarged, which involved the cession of lands "and rent charges of the annual value of 1000*l.* and "upwards, from the properties of the See. Some "delay occurred, from the difficulty of finding lands "out of lease, and available for this purpose, of so "large an amount; but a considerable part of the "Bishop's plan was accomplished before his decease, "and care has been taken, in a recent Act for regu-"lating Episcopal revenues, to secure to the Eccle-"siastical Commissioners the necessary powers to "fulfil his considerate and benevolent intentions.

"In the course of his Lordship's administration "of the Diocese, many Churches were built, and "Livings improved, by means of his private funds, "which were not comprised in this general scheme "of augmentation; and many useful plans were "under his consideration, at the time of his death, "for the better regulation and benefit of the large "and populous parishes of Durham, and Northum-"berland."

The next two letters which occur, from the Bishop to the Rev. W. Bruce Knight, contain some interesting passages and sentiments. In the first of them, dated "Hanover Square, Dec. 28, 1832," the Writer says, "I wish I could cheer you, in these "darksome days, with any thing of public or of "private concern, which might enliven the prevail-

"ing gloom. But, in truth, the aspect of the times, "like that which an impenetrable fog just now pre-"sents at my window, baffles all attempt at getting "an insight into what we are to hope for, or to "fear. Were I not compelled, *nolens volens*, to take "a prominent part in public life, most gladly would "I retreat to some obscure nook or corner, and bid "farewell to the great world, with all its doings "and misdoings." In the second, dated "East Sheen, "Feb. 6, 1833," answering one which had been received in the interval, he writes, "I thank you for "the trouble you have kindly taken on my account, "and am gratified in hearing that my little tokens "of remembrance are so well received. Your dis-"tribution of them always appears to me to be very "judicious. The poor widow, whose husband I well "remember, appears to be especially an object of "consideration; and you will gratify me by apply-"ing to her use an additional ten pounds, which I "will enclose for that purpose. I do not wonder "at your anxiety respecting the destinies of our "Church. What they may be, I venture not yet "to anticipate. You will see what sort of a hint is "given, in the King's speech, of intentions, on the "part of Government, to take up the subject; but "in what way, or to what extent, I do not believe "is hitherto decided upon. Only it seems deter-"mined that tithes are to undergo some kind of "*commutation*, at least. I wish it may be nothing "worse than a corn rent, so adjusted as to be a fair "and *bonâ fide* equivalent. But we are quite in "the dark as to the specific measure to be proposed.

"With respect to a more equitable and judicious "distribution of the revenues of the Church, glanced "at in the speech, the terms are of rather *ominous* "import; and I wish they may not intend what "you and I should call *spoliation*. But here, again, "there is nothing as yet tangible, or ripe for dis-"cussion; and seeing how many other concerns, of "deep interest and magnitude, are likely to be first "brought on, it is probable that time may be allowed "us for preparation. In the meanwhile, I derive "much satisfaction from a full persuasion, or a good "hope, that there is on our Bench so much firm-"ness and discretion, as will save us from discredit "among those whose good opinion is to be most "desired. For the rest, we must trust to *that* "*Power* which alone can overrule the designs and "actions of men, and make all things work together "for good. Unworthy as we may, individually or "collectively, be of His favour, I would fain hope "that the Vineyard which His own right hand "hath planted in this country, shall not be given "over to destruction. Thank you for your kind "inquiries as to my health. Though I am scarcely "ever free from ailments, or capable of much con-"tinued exertion, I ought to be thankful that I am "not wholly disabled from taking a share in public "duties. Scarcely venturing to hope that I can ren-"der any essential service in the troubles we must "expect to encounter, I yet trust, by God's help, to "be found at my post, and not to swerve, so long "as there is any *vis vitæ* remaining in me."

Most of the subjects thus alluded to, as having

been mentioned in the King's speech were put by; and the Irish Church Bill appears to have been the most important ecclesiastical measure of this session. To that Bill the Bishop of Durham, decidedly, was not consenting, though, it seems, a rumour of his consent had been spread abroad. Accordingly, he assured his correspondent, (May 6, 1833,) "As to "what I am reported to have said, that the Irish "Church Bill had better not be opposed, for that "in a short time we should only have a worse, there "is not a shadow of foundation for it. I quite agree "with you, that a worse can hardly be; and, I be-"lieve, there are few of the Clergy who are not "much of the same opinion. The Clergy of my "own Diocese have sent up a very strong petition "against it, though I studiously refrained (as I al-"ways do respecting such appeals to the Legisla-"ture) from previously recommending the proceed-"ing, lest it should be said that they were acting "more in deference to my opinion, or under my "undue influence, than from their own unbiassed "convictions. I think it highly creditable that the "subject has been so generally and effectively taken "up by the Clergy. Your Welsh Clergy have shewn "a noble feeling and spirit towards their Irish bre-"thren, and I honour them for it." Again, he says, (June 24, 1833,) "I should, before this time, have "taken my departure from the North, had I not "felt it a duty to abide the result of the Irish "Church Bill, which I consider as the prelude to "measures equally destructive of our own. Its "framers, however, you will see, have cut out of it

"one of its most iniquitous clauses, evidently for "the purpose of gaining over the Conservatives, so "as to insure the second reading of the Bill in the "House of Lords; in which case, there can be no "doubt that the measure will be carried through its "subsequent stages with very little other improve-"ment; and enough, I fear, will be left, to work "the eventual destruction of the Church, both *there* "and *here*, at no distant period; since, whatever "principles, or rather *subversion of principles*, may "be countenanced in the one case, our enemies will "soon find occasion, or pretext, to visit upon our-"selves. Such appears to me to be our present posi-"tion; and, though I have never yet been prone to "despondency, I own that my misgivings are many "and oppressive." This Bill, as the Bishop anticipated, was suffered to pass. He did not fail to speak on the occasion; and the Writer regrets that his speech is not at hand. In one of his letters he characterises it as "but a slender performance, little "more than a skeleton." Such, however, one can hardly suppose it to have been: no production of his mind could have been slender; if a skeleton, it must have been the skeleton of a strong man. In the same letter he farther observes, "Our future "prospects respecting Church-matters are indeed dis-"couraging. Open and insidious enemies, timid wa-"verers, lukewarm and over-zealous friends, pressing "upon us on all sides, may well appal the stoutest "spirit, and perplex the soundest judgment. And "as to the intentions of the present Cabinet, we can "know no more about them, than they do them-

"selves, which, I verily believe, is just nothing at "all. They seem to have no fixed plan, no fixed "principles, but act on the mere spur of the occa- "sion, as may best suit their own interests, and fall "in with the party whom, for the moment, they "find it expedient to retain in their service. May "God grant us a good deliverance: we have no "other sure hope, or refuge. It is fearful to think "how little, as a community, we seem desirous of "seeking that present help in trouble: yet let us "not despond."

About this period, there were projected and formed, in many places, Church Societies or Associations, with a view more effectually to resist and counteract the plans of Dissenters, and other enemies of the Establishment. The Bishop, having been consulted on the subject, appears, by his answer, to have rather doubted the wisdom of setting on foot these institutions. Writing from Auckland Castle, Dec. 18, 1833, he says, "Respecting the associations, you "advert to, of friends of the Church, I hardly ven- "ture to give an opinion; chiefly, because I think, "that neither in encouraging nor discouraging them, "should the Bishops put themselves forward. It "seems to me desirable, that whatever the Clergy "incline to do in this way, should be done sponta- "neously, and without even the appearance of being "urged to it by their ecclesiastical rulers. For this "reason, I leave my own Clergy to follow entirely "their own inclination and judgment. I hear, how- "ever, (and I am not sorry to hear,) that the inten- "tion of an *association* is (for the present at least)

"relinquished, and that nothing beyond an *address* "of confidence to the Archbishop is now in contem- "plation. I hope the matter will stop there, and "that nothing more will be thought of; unless, "upon the introduction of any hostile measures into "Parliament relative to the Church, it should be "deemed necessary to come forward with petitions "to both Houses."

April 24, 1834, the endeavour to obtain admission for Dissenters to Degrees at Oxford and Cambridge, and the Church-rate Bill, being then in agitation, he remarks, with his usual penetration and foresight, "The attack upon our Universities wears a formid- "able aspect. I can see in it nothing but a wish "to undermine the Established Church, by weaken- "ing its best bulwarks. It is idle, worse than idle, "to pretend that the claim to Degrees is not with "the ulterior view of getting the government and "the resources of the Universities into other hands." —"The proposed measure of Church-rates seems to "give vehement displeasure to the out-and-out Re- "formers, and so far may be presumed not very "objectionable to us. On the whole, it seems ra- "ther an agreeable surprise to our Church friends. "But will not the Minister cook it, and spoil it, "after all, to make it more palatable to his Radical "friends?" This was during a short visit to London. Within a month he returned to Harrogate, where he had left Mrs. Van Mildert in a very precarious state of health. Writing thence, he says, "My own health retrograded sadly in London, and "my medical attendant was urgent that I should

"hasten my departure; advice which I gladly fol-
"lowed, as soon as circumstances would permit:
"and, though my journey was fatiguing and dis-
"tressing, I already find much relief from the quiet
"and the discipline of this place; so as to give me
"a good hope, that in about another fortnight, we
"may take up our summer quarters at Auckland
"Castle. I have no intention of revisiting the Me-
"tropolis this season. Its turmoils ill suit a vale-
"tudinarian like myself; and to be in the midst of
"them, 'spectator, vel auditor tantum,' is next to
"impossible. I opened my mouth in Parliament,
"for a few minutes, on the Petition for admitting
"Dissenters to our Universities; and another time,
"at Lincoln's Inn Fields, to deprecate an unhappy
"spirit, which is getting the ascendancy there in
"our venerable Society."

At the summer Assizes this year, the Bishop ventured to preach before the Judges, in the Cathedral of Durham, and did not suffer materially from the exertion. "I am thankful," he says, "to have "been able to do even this small service." The Judges, before whom this public effort was made, were Lord Lyndhurst and Mr. Baron Gurney; and the sermon was subsequently published at their request, and will be found in the following collection.

The Bishop continued in the North during the autumn, suffering almost daily, and at times to a very exhausting degree, from his now decidedly incurable complaint. Moreover, he was much afflicted and depressed in spirits, by the equally hopeless indisposition and infirmities of *her*, who, from the

period of their union, had watched for his health and comfort with an affection of no ordinary character, and had always been answerably regarded by him. She, who aforetime had helped not a little to bear his anxieties, was unhappily become to him a constant object of anxiety. In a letter dated "Auckland Castle, Nov. 24, 1834," which appears to have contained 50*l.* for a special purpose, besides his accustomed annual donation to the Diocese of Llandaff, he thus touches, towards the end, on these melancholy topics: "My state of health does not "admit of much exertion, either of mind or body. "A severe and painful indisposition, a few weeks "ago, accompanied with a very general derangement "of the whole system, has left me exceedingly dis-"abled in all respects; and should the winter prove "a severe one, I may find it a hard matter to strug-"gle through it. Mrs. Van Mildert continues much "the same as for the last twelvemonth, though not "likely to rally again, as in former times."

In the March of next year, (1835,) the Bishop wrote from Hanover Square—"I am in town, only "for a few days, to take my seat, leave my proxy, "and get what information I can, from head-quar-"ters, of the measures in contemplation for Church "Reform. From what I can collect, I incline to "augur somewhat better of our prospects, than be-"fore I came here. The Government intends, I am "persuaded, to act towards us in the most friendly "and considerate manner." This, it should be noted, was during the short administration of Sir Robert Peel, of the stability of which he appears, from the

first, to have been doubtful. By the following June he had again been to town, and had returned to Harrogate. During this second short visit, a consultation had been held upon his case by Sir Henry Halford, Dr. Prout, and Mr. Copeland; the result of which was not encouraging. They determined, considering the case to be an irremediable one, that palliatives only should be made use of; and for a few days the suffering was mitigated, but not for any longer period. The state, also, of Mrs. Van Mildert continued such, as seldom, for many days together, to permit a cessation of alarm.

There is only one more letter belonging to the series, from which the foregoing extracts have been made. The Writer has not this before him, but transcribes the following account of it from the hand of him to whom it was addressed: "It is "dated 'Auckland Castle, Dec. 8, 1835,' and brought "a draft for 100*l.*, to be distributed by me, as usual, "in this Diocese (Llandaff). He also speaks in it "of suffering grievously, and being unfit for exer-"tion of any kind; and ends with these affecting "words—'My good friend, fare you well: with the "best old-fashioned salutations of the approaching "hallowed season, (including a Bishop's blessing to "you and yours,) believe me always sincerely and "affectionately yours. W. D.'"

The Compiler of this Memoir cannot leave it to be supposed, that there was but little, or no epistolary communication between his late beloved Relative and himself. Many, indeed, and affectionate, were the letters which he received from him; but chiefly on

topics of such a private nature, as to be unfit for the public eye. One or two passages, however, may here, without impropriety, be extracted. In answer to some approving remarks on "The Christian's "daily Preparation for Death and Eternity," taken from Hele's Devotions, and placed in their list of books by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, the Bishop observes—"Hele's Devotions are "all of them of the very best description, and I am "truly glad that you are distributing them. I know "of none more affecting and impressive, yet so free "from any thing extravagant, or likely to mislead. "An invaluable lay-friend of mine, has been at the "entire cost of re-editing the whole of the Devo-"tions, as well as the detached portions for the "*sick*, and for the Sacrament; and the profits of "the sale (which has been very extensive) are given "to the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. "Such instances of piety and benevolence from Lay-"men are of special worth." There is also a letter which describes more fully his state of health in the month of May preceding his decease. Writing from Hanover Square, in reply to a particular inquiry, he says—"Your kind letter deserved an earlier ac-"knowledgment, and should have been sooner no-"ticed, had I been more stationary, or less indis-"posed from painful suffering. My complaint has, "for many weeks past, scarcely allowed me an in-"terval free from pain for two hours together, either "by day or night. It still continues, and I believe "it to admit of no effectual remedy, but of mitiga-"tion only. For *that* I shall be thankful, if it

"please God to let me experience some ease, and "not be wholly disqualified for the duties of my "station. But, under whatever circumstances, it "will become me to say, *His will be done.* In "public affairs I do not attempt to take a part, ex-"cept when consulted, as a sort of *Chamber Coun-"sel*, in which I have had lately full employment." Lastly, he thus, according to his annual custom for many years, remembered a congregation, with which he had been connected only a very short time, at an early period of his life:—"The near approach of "Christmas reminds me not to overlook your flock, "(some of them formerly of my flock also,) in the "distribution of a few comforts, which may add "somewhat to the gladness of that hallowed season. "The enclosed bank-note of twenty pounds will, I "hope, answer this purpose, and keep alive their "kind recollection of me. You will know best how "to apportion it." This was written from Auckland Castle, Dec. 17, 1835, scarcely more than two months before his death. On a previous occasion of the same nature, adverting to the state of one of the family, and taking notice, as he always remembered to do, of the approaching season, he concluded with these affecting words—"A happy Christmas "and new year to you all—to the sick and to the "well: even to the bed of sickness and pain, Christ-"mas brings its 'glad tidings;' and the new year, "which opens to *eternity*, may be better than that "which is closed by *time*."

By the specially affectionate and impressive close of his last letter to his friend and former Chaplain

at Llandaff, the Bishop may seem to have been under a presentiment that he was writing to him for the last time. Yet this, perhaps, was but a transient feeling; since those immediately about him had not then perceived any decisive tokens that his constitution was rapidly giving way. Indeed, during the month of January, 1836, his sufferings were thought to be abating, rather than increasing; and on Sunday the 24th, he felt himself sufficiently relieved to preach once more to his household, and probably a few besides, in the Chapel of Auckland Castle. However, he ceased not to suffer much, and was looking, on the whole, "sadly altered," without any prospect of recovery, or amendment. His fatal illness commenced on the 11th of the following February. By the account of a friend on the spot, it consisted of fits of shivering and pain, succeeded by a degree of weakness and languor, which, within a few days, left scarcely a hope of his restoration. A letter from a Clergyman nearly connected with him, dated "Auckland Castle, Feb. 21," thus announced the expected melancholy event:—"Our dear and "excellent Bishop expired this morning, (Feb. 21,) "at 9 o'clock, apparently without the slightest pain "or distress. His pulse had ceased to beat, at least "it was not to be perceived, for two hours before "he had breathed his last. This day week, I had the "satisfaction of praying with him, and he was then "strong enough to join me, which he did with much "fervency and devotion. From that time, however, "he has been in such a state of stupor, as to be "totally unable to keep up his attention, for more

"than a minute together."—Such, as related by those who stood around his dying bed, was the release of this great and good Prelate from the pains of his fleshly tabernacle, and the troubles of this world.

It was at first designed to inter the Bishop's mortal remains, without any public attendance, in the Chapel belonging to Auckland Castle; that place having been probably contemplated by himself. But the Dean and Chapter of Durham expressed such an anxious wish to have them deposited in the Cathedral, and so liberally offered to undertake the necessary arrangements, that those with whom the determination rested, felt it impossible to withhold their consent. At Durham, therefore, on the 1st of March, the last mournful ceremony took place. The morning appointed was, unfortunately, most inclement. Nevertheless, besides the dignitaries and official persons, and others, as well of the City, as of the Cathedral and University, and the mourners, eight in number, consisting chiefly of the Nephews and Executors of the Deceased, Lord Ravensworth, W. L. Wharton, esq. the High-Sheriff, C. J. Clavering, esq. the Constable of the Castle, and a numerous body of the most respectable Gentlemen of the County, and of the Clergy of the Diocese more than sixty, were in attendance, uninvited, to testify their sentiments on the occasion. A grave, or tomb, had been prepared within the rails of the Altar; at which, and previously in the Choir, the service was, with due solemnity, performed; and the ceremony was closed with a proclamation, in

the usual form, of the style and titles of the Departed. Be it mentioned, also, that a deep feeling of respect and regret evidently pervaded the multitude of all ranks, who were present merely as spectators. Scarcely ever, perhaps, has there been witnessed a more becoming seriousness of demeanour, than that which prevailed amongst the large and promiscuous assemblage then filling the spacious aisles of the Cathedral; and the effect was remarkably impressive. Nor was this all the honour that was voluntarily shewn to the memory of the late Bishop of Durham. In the Durham Advertiser, which announced his death, appeared a summary of his life and character, from the pen (it is understood) of his esteemed Chaplain, the present Rector of Sedgfield, admirable equally for the warm affection and just discrimination which pervade it. Likewise, on the Sunday following, an eloquent sermon on the subject was delivered in the Cathedral, by the Rev. Prebendary Townsend; and on the day of the interment, minute bells were tolled in several principal towns of the Diocese. Moreover, some time after, in the House of Lords, during a conversation which took place as to the alterations in the Diocese of Durham, the Marquis of Londonderry having pronounced the highest possible eulogium on the late Right Reverend Prelate, Viscount Melbourne, whose policy the Bishop had steadfastly opposed, entirely concurred in the justice of it, expressing his belief that all would admit it to have been most justly deserved. And, at the subsequent spring Assizes, Lord Denman, from whom, on public matters, the deceased Bishop had equally

differed, said, in his Charge to the Grand Jury at Durham, that he thought it would not be consistent with the feelings of any man, that, in a great assemblage of the inhabitants of the County, it should be omitted to mention the eminent virtues of the individual of whom they had lately been deprived: he believed "There never was a Prelate who more "deserved the good opinion of the public, than the "lamented individual to whom he referred. His "piety and learning placed him among the highest "names of England; while his numerous acts of "charity and munificence, and his love of truth and "justice, made him entitled to their warmest grati-"tude and praise, as one of the greatest Benefac-"tors which this, or any other country had ever "been blessed with." Also, the Venerable Archdeacon Thorp, in a Charge some time afterward delivered, remarked—"The removal of such a man "as Bishop Van Mildert must have been felt as a "serious calamity at any time. His great experi-"ence and authority; the space he filled in the "eye of the Church; his thorough devotion to her "cause; his superiority to personal and common "objects;—rendered a life, so dear, on other ac-"counts, to his Clergy and his friends, invaluable "to the public. In the ten years of perplexity, "during which he presided over us, we had the "most ample proof of his worth: and the paternal "solicitude of his administration; the cheerful ap-"plication of the energies of his powerful mind to "the interests of the Diocese, and of his Clergy; "his liberalities, bounded only by his means of

" exercising them; his sincere, open, courteous car-
" riage, which won the favour and the confidence of
" all who approached him; his love of truth, and
" those who held it;—gave to him the highest place
" in our affections and esteem."—Thus eminent and universal was the respect accorded to the excellent qualities which had distinguished the Subject of this Memoir. So fully does the truth appear to have been felt by all honest men, of every class and party, that, when he was struck by death, " A Prince and " a great man," and one not less good than great, fell that day in Israel.

If the foregoing Narrative has been in any degree adequate to its intention, the propriety of the above sentiments and testimonies may be thought to require no additional confirmation. Yet the Compiler, begs leave to subjoin, by way of recapitulation, a few supplementary notices and remarks.

His manner both of expressing and conducting himself in every public department, shews Bp. Van Mildert to have possessed an extraordinary combination of depth and quickness of understanding. No sophistries could mislead him, no mysticism baffle the simplicity, no profundity escape the penetration of his intellect. If phrases of the Prophet may be so applied, " Darkness became light before him, and " crooked things straight," directly that he undertook to declare and state them. Scarcely any one could more clearly comprehend a matter in all its bearings and tendencies, or more convincingly enunciate and explain it. Of such his eminent intellec-

tual power, not only the several volumes which he published, but also his speeches in the House of Lords, are a sufficient proof. And to this, under a higher influence, may be attributed, in a great measure, the characteristic firmness of principle which, on the most trying occasions, he maintained. His mind could not, for any temporary convenience, depart from a position, which it had once thus fully and throughly perceived to be true. Neither perplexing circumstances, nor pleas of expediency, could give a cast to his mental vision; nor could the strongest worldly motives and suggestions ever mislead him into abandoning the things which he had previously judged to be right. To the part which he had seen to be good, and had accordingly chosen, to that unchangeably he adhered. There may, in some persons, be noted an immovable prejudice, an obstinate adherence to notions blindly taken up, supported by pride and ignorance, and often accompanied by ill-temper. But to the distinguished person whom we are now remembering, nothing of this kind has been imputed, except, perhaps, by malignant scoffers and traducers. He had always a reason to give for his determination on every public question; and that so worthy to be observed, both for its intrinsic weight, and the becoming mode in which it was delivered, that even they who would by no means be persuaded, were fain attentively to listen, and to commend. And if there were any to whom, at the time, his unyielding disposition could not approve itself, such can hardly have failed since to discern

the almost prophetical accuracy with which he foretold the evil results of each particular measure that he opposed.

As a Divine, however, and a Bishop, more than as a Legislator, the Subject of this Memoir is to be considered. In these characters, then, he signally evinced the powers of mind above ascribed to him, and, in short, every other superior faculty which might best qualify him for the elevated stations that he was called to fill. Of his theological writings, enough (perhaps more than was necessary) has already been said in detail. Suffice it here only in general to remark, that if the appreciation which has been made of them be admitted, they will be read, both for the fine simplicity of their language, and the excellent learning and wisdom which pervades them, while sound religion and a pure style are in request. Of his letters, too, which were usually penned with an extraordinary rapidity, a sufficient number have incidentally been inserted, to shew how clearly ran the current of his thoughts, and withal how warmly and affectionately, on every topic that was presented to him. His epistolary effusions must have appeared to the reader equally free from affectation and remissness, the unpremeditated expressions of a vigorous understanding, and an always benevolent and friendly heart, notwithstanding that they were often written under a sore burden of anxieties and infirmities. And the amount of his labours in this respect, and of his application, except when absolutely disabled by ill health, to the mass of business that was continually pressing upon him, was such

as frequently to excite the wonder of those who were best acquainted with his every-day habits and constitution. Moreover, on coming forth from the fatigues of his study, he appeared admirably qualified, as became his station, to lead and to adorn society. Although afflicted with the impediment of deafness, from an early period of his life, he could always, when tolerably free from disease, find delight in the company of the wise and good, and impart to them not less than he received. In a select circle, his conversation was lively and pleasant, and often highly instructive, without being solemn or authoritative. Neither did he shrink from the publicities of his situation, nor fail satisfactorily to discharge them, so long as his physical powers continued equal to the exertion. It has been observed by persons better qualified to speak on such matters than the Writer can pretend to be, that the mind of Bishop Van Mildert was peculiarly apt to expand itself, and become instantly equal to each new elevation of its owner. Certain it is, that, on taking possession of the princely See of Durham, he not only succeeded in conciliating (as at Llandaff) the affections, in general, of the Clergy, but could also at once gracefully assume his station at the head of the Nobility and Gentry of the Palatinate. He instantly shewed himself noble, as if he had been nobly born, and educated, instead of having been raised to nobility from an inferior rank. And on his public days, which, until his latter years, were more pleasant to him than irksome, he did the honours of Auckland Castle with a liberal hospitality, and

dignified courtesy and propriety, which elicited universal commendation. The entertainments provided by him on those occasions, were decidedly not inferior, either in sumptuousness or elegance, to any of the preceding times; and his demeanour, towards the numerous guests, was that of a high-bred Christian Nobleman, rendering to all the honour and respect that was due.

Need it here be farther said, or repeated, that he was likewise constantly liberal and bountiful? His liberality (according to the modern acceptation of the term) some, perhaps, may feel disposed to call in question; but not any who truly knew him, or sought his aid. Never did there live a man less inclined to bigotry than the late Bishop of Durham, unless it be bigotry to hold fast the truth, and not to place it on the same level with error. He could behave himself kindly towards persons of all religious denominations, and respect their scruples and various opinions, provided they were held in faith and charity, so as to be free from the bitterness of a sectarian spirit. With Roman Catholics, notwithstanding his uncompromising opposition to their political claims, he used to be on friendly terms; nor did the Presbyterians and others, within his Diocese, find him ungracious or reluctant, when their *personal* necessities were made known to him; only he would not contribute towards the expense of Dissenting places of worship, nor in any way towards the support of the "Dissenting interest." Except this evidently proper restriction, he continually dealt with a free and open hand to the many who would

apply, and to not a few also who were reluctant to apply for his assistance. Large, indeed, as his means were, his heart appears to have been enlarged in a full proportion towards all whom he could relieve or gratify. It has been seen (though very inadequately) by his letters how freely he ministered to the necessities of Llandaff, after his translation to another See; and the sums which he dispensed to public institutions, both in his Diocese and in other quarters, are too well known to be here recounted: it has been stated that he appropriated considerably more than a thousand pounds of his yearly revenue, to the augmentation of small Livings, pursuant to the Act of Parliament introduced by the Archbishop of Canterbury for that purpose; and that to the University set on foot by the Dean and Chapter of Durham, he was a contributor of at least double that sum for several successive years. Yet, in all probability, his private munificence was fully, or more than, equal to the examples which met the public eye. It was his practice to send annual gifts, such as to the poor of his first small Benefice, upon which, during his incumbency, he had expended in building much more than he had received. He would also, together with his relief, recollect and ask concerning the objects of it, and occasionally accompany it with a kind message of remembrance; which denotes his generosity (though profuse) to have been far nobler than the mere prodigality of one scattering abroad what he knew not how to spend upon himself. At the same time, he frequently devised liberal things towards persons above the want of food

and raiment, with a view to set them at ease from straitened circumstances, or to gratify, in an acceptable manner, what he conceived might be their reasonable wishes and desires. Thus did he sometimes obviate disappointment, in cases where he felt that public patronage might be expected of him, but could not conveniently be extended: thus did he enliven many a flagging spirit, and uphold and establish one and another, who must else have sunk beneath their condition in the world. With these habits, it was not to be supposed that he had accumulated much to dispose of by his Executors; and, accordingly, a report prevailed, about the time of his decease, that he had left nothing besides an inconsiderable life-assurance. The fact, however, was, that he had taken care to make a sufficiently respectable provision for his Widow[b], after the deduction of a few legacies, which, there is reason to believe, would have been more in number, had the fatal seizure been less sudden or disabling.

Bishop Van Mildert was of a middle height; his countenance was pale, but strongly expressive; and his frame light and spare. In his motions he was commonly quick and active, but of a remarkably erect gait, never undignified, and well able, when it behoved him, to assume a highly imposing step and mien. Though usually gentle and condescending in his manners to men of all conditions who approached him, he evidently maintained an habitual self-respect,

[b] Mrs. Van Mildert died at Harrogate, Dec. 19, 1837; and, having been removed to Durham, was interred in the same vault with the Bishop, on the 28th of that month.

and remembrance of what was due to his high station; preventing, or repelling with a proper severity, the approaches of unbecoming familiarity. In his diet he was remarkably temperate, or rather abstemious; to which must be attributed the fact, that, notwithstanding his mental labour, and a weakly constitution, he attained, and somewhat exceeded, the scriptural age of man. Scarcely at any time of his life, did he enjoy good, or comfortable health. In childhood, he was subject (as already said) to a weakness of the eyes, brought on, perhaps, by a severe attack of the small-pox. When he was grown up, an hereditary tendency to hæmorrhage of the lungs, or throat, repeatedly shewed itself, in a degree to excite considerable alarm. About the middle of his age, a fever overtook him, attended by a disorder of the system, which could never satisfactorily be remedied. And towards the close of his life, he had to experience the twofold affliction of suffering daily acute pain in his own person, and of seeing her who had many years been his best earthly stay and comfort, in an equally distressing, though a widely different state. Besides all this, his maladies were mostly of an irritable cast, and he seems to have inherited from his parents a highly sensitive constitution, of both mind and body. It is not, therefore, to be thought strange, if occasionally he manifested a spirit not incapable of being agitated, or excited. Still, however, he gave not way to unseemly emotions; and certainly nothing could exceed his placability even towards persons who had grievously resisted and offended him. In this, as in every other

part of his character, he was evidently actuated by the spirit of the Gospel, which appears to have ruled, with a continually increasing influence, in his heart. By all that is before the public, his views of the Christian dispensation were not only learned and accurate, but, moreover, full, lucid, and spiritual. Yet if any would know what may be called his last confession, in a sermon preached only a month before his death occur the following emphatic passages: "A deep sense of our own unworthiness, "and a lively faith in God's mercies through Christ, "are indispensable to the acceptance of our prayers." —"The great principle of every one who has been "taught the truth as it is in Jesus, is this—that we "are unable of ourselves to help ourselves; that "'our sufficiency is of God;' that 'God was in Christ "reconciling the world unto Himself;' and that He "'so loved the world, that He gave his only-begot-"ten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should "not perish, but have everlasting life.' This is the "foundation of our faith." There were also found in the writing-case on his library table, and elsewhere, other manuscripts of a strictly private character[c], which decidedly prove to his surviving relatives, that he remembered the duty of intercession, both for his

[c] Two specimens of these compositions may be here inserted; one, a Prayer written previously to the composition of his Charge for 1831; the other, a short Poem on his Birthday, 1833.

"PRAYER.

"O God, the Fountain of all wisdom, without whose aid and "blessing, vain are all our endeavours to promote Thy glory, "or to set forth the knowledge of Thy truth; assist me, I

country and his near connexions; that his principal works were begun with prayer; and that the more severely he was tried and wounded, the more fer-

" beseech Thee, in all my religious studies and pursuits, with " Thy most gracious favour and benediction. More especially, " I pray Thee, vouchsafe me such a measure of Thy grace and " help, as may enable me to prepare a fit and seasonable Dis- " course to be delivered to the Clergy committed to my charge, " at my intended Visitation now approaching. Grant me, O " Lord, by Thy Holy Spirit, to design only what is lawful and " right, and conducive to the edification of my hearers; and " effectually aid me in discharging this sacred duty in a manner " acceptable in Thy sight. Crown my labours, O Lord, I be- " seech Thee, with such success as will most promote Thy glory, " the good of Thy Church, and the salvation of myself and " others; for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord."

"MY BIRTHDAY.

" Another Birthday on this day appears,
" To swell the already long account of years;
" And, lo! there stands my faithful BIOSCOPE *,
" Which gives a warning not to fondly hope
" For future Birthdays, more and more, to come,
" Before I reach, at length, my final home.
" Thanks, friendly Monitor, that wak'st a thought,
" With many a grave, yet cheering lesson fraught.
" For still *one special birthday* there remains,
" Which from Earth's fleeting pleasures, and its pains,
" Ere long must all our hopes and fears dissever:—
" And *that's* a BIRTHDAY which will last FOR EVER!
" All-gracious Power! whate'er on Earth shall be
" My lot, O! let my heart still turn to THEE!
" Thither my daily thoughts, affections, bend,
" Where THOU hast taught them daily to ascend;
" Till freed by Faith, from doubt, from fear, from thrall,
" They reach that Bliss, where THOU art ALL IN ALL!"

* An allusion, probably, to the "Bioscope," by G. Penn, Esq.

vent and humble were his devotions. He was taken away, it may be considered, not too soon for himself, with respect both to his mind and body. Nothing remained for him but suffering in the flesh; and the course of public affairs concerning the Church, was becoming, or rather had become, such as he could not observe without continual grief and apprehension. They, however, who enjoyed the privilege of being intimate with him, and of knowing his many excellent qualities, cannot fail still to regret him, and to exclaim,

> Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus
> Tam cari Capitis,

at the thought that he is to be seen and conversed with no more.

In conclusion, it may seem to many an omission, that the Writer has not attempted to give a distinct statement of his Relative's opinion as to the matters in agitation about the Church. But he has nothing later, on which to found such a statement, than his speeches in Parliament, and his Charges; by the notices of which, it must have sufficiently been seen, that for the most part, though not blindly, nor indiscriminately, he was against the changes and innovations now in progress. If it be farther objected, on the whole, that what has been written is throughout a panegyric, the Writer might plead his near relationship to the Deceased, as a fair excuse with all reasonable men. Apart from this, however, he can truly say, after an examination of many private documents, that he has felt himself obliged to keep

back much which would have enhanced, but nothing which, on being fully understood, could have cast a shade over the character of the late Bishop, and LAST COUNT PALATINE OF DURHAM.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

1 Cor. xiv. 15.

I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Understanding also[a].

THE essential characteristics of Prayer are very comprehensively expressed in these words of the Apostle. To "pray with the "*Spirit*," is to pray with faith, with attention, with fervour, and a certain elevation of soul, towards the great object of our devotions. To "pray with the *Understanding*," is to pray in a clear and intelligible manner, with a composed frame of mind, with a due regard to the nature of our petitions, and with a right apprehension of the relation that subsists between God and ourselves.

Whoever has observed the mistakes, into which men are apt to fall, respecting the true nature of Prayer, will perceive how important it is to insist upon these requisites. The op-

[a] Written and printed in 1797, revised and enlarged in 1817.

posite extremes of Lukewarmness and Enthusiasm would be avoided, by duly attending to the rule here laid down by St. Paul for the regulation of his own devotions. Enthusiasm is the error of those who do not pray "with the *Understanding;*" who imagine that devotion consists in certain vehement effusions of the Spirit, poured forth with unpremeditated ardour, dictated by internal feelings only, and yielding implicitly to the impressions of a heated imagination. Lukewarmness is the error of those who deem it essential to the character of *rational* worshippers, to suppress, as much as possible, every emotion of the heart; and to approach the Almighty with cold and phlegmatic apathy, or with the familiar ease of colloquial intercourse, rather than with the deep sentiments of contrition and awe, due from sinful creatures to an offended Creator. These are they who pray not "with the *Spirit;*" reducing faith, piety, penitence, and gratitude, to a mere abstract sense of moral duty, uninfluenced by that genuine personal interest in the performance of it, which characterizes the humble and devout suppliant at the throne of grace.

Both these errors betray a weakness of judgment, incapable of discerning the union

that ought to subsist between the Spirit and the Understanding, in the performance of every religious service. Enthusiasm exposes the mind to the delusions of passion and imagination: Lukewarmness deadens those feelings of the heart, which were given us for the wisest purposes, and which can never be more usefully or laudably called into action, than in the service of our Creator. In either case, the true purpose of Divine Worship is lost. Prayer without the Spirit, is lifeless and vain. Prayer without the Understanding, is unmeaning rant and extravagance.

Of the pernicious effects consequent upon either of these extremes, when it becomes generally prevalent in a Christian community, the history of our own country affords very striking examples. In the era of Popish darkness, the evils of *superstitious* Enthusiasm were severely felt. The performance of public Worship in a language not understood by the people, tended to keep them in gross ignorance; and as the Scriptures were neither suffered to be read but under most discouraging restrictions, nor were even translated by authority into the vernacular language, that ignorance became almost invincible. Deplorable errors, both in Faith

and Practice, were the natural, if not necessary, consequence. Doctrines were engrafted upon the Christian Faith, unauthorized by Holy Writ, and irreconcilable with its plainest declarations. Superstitious, and even idolatrous ceremonies were supposed to atone for the worst moral depravities; and the life and substance of pure Religion were sacrificed to an ostentatious, Pharisaical system of outward observances.

Another instance of the evils of Enthusiasm is recorded in our annals, of an aspect exceedingly different from this. In that unfortunate period, when the pure and moderate spirit of our Reformed Church was overpowered, for a time, by republican fanaticism and intolerance, effects no less to be deprecated rapidly overspread the nation. The Scriptures, it is true, were in the hands of every one. But the perversion of them to purposes of licentiousness, disobedience, schism, and rapine, shewed the fatal consequences of propagating a spirit of religious ardour, without discretion, and without understanding.

To this period a reign succeeded, which no less strongly exemplified the evils of the opposite error. A general Lukewarmness, or rather an utter indifference to Religion, followed close upon Enthusiasm. The ridicule

which banished the one, introduced the other. Indifference led the way to Infidelity: and, the spirit of Religion once extinguished, a cold, philosophical Scepticism usurped its place. Similar dispositions are also apparent in our own times; and many of those who are themselves most remarkable for such dispositions, and most industrious to instil them into others, direct their endeavours towards damping the true spirit of piety, and especially that part of it which regards Public Worship; well knowing, that one of the most probable means to effect the destruction of Religion itself, is to give men a distaste for its devotional services.

Nor can we fail to perceive their policy in this respect, when we reflect how intimately the duties both of Private Prayer and of Public Worship are connected with our religious conduct in general. For, as the neglect or observance of these will, for the most part, be accompanied with the omission or performance of other Christian duties; so the *manner* in which their devotions are performed, will, in general, discover the complexion of men's religious characters. If they are hurried into excesses by a rapturous, ardent spirit, their prayers will be tinctured with the same spirit: if they are careless and

indifferent in their ordinary religious concerns, their prayers will be so likewise. But in them whose zeal and judgment are alike conspicuous; who "pray with the Spirit and "with the Understanding also;" we naturally expect to find a general tenor of conduct correspondent with these indications; a conduct, distinguished by purity of principle, and by habitual consistency of practice.

These considerations shew how necessary it is, that great care and circumspection should be used, in selecting devotions for ourselves, in prescribing them to others, and, above all, in framing a Liturgy for public use. The great argument for all precomposed forms of Prayer, is the necessity of guarding against *Enthusiasm*, and against *Inattention:* an argument, which has never yet been successfully controverted. It applies, indeed, to the importance of having approved manuals of Devotion, even for the *closet;* since comparatively few may be trusted to their own extemporaneous effusions in their addresses to the Supreme Being. But it applies with double force to the Public Service of the Church, where every petition ought to be duly and deliberately weighed, so as to adapt it to the general exigencies of a whole Christian assembly; and to be expressed in the

plainest, yet in the most forcible and energetic manner.

And here we are naturally led to some observations on the peculiar and acknowledged excellence of *our own Liturgy;* which preserves the most happy medium between these extremes; being eminently distinguished, on the one hand, by the general spirit of piety which pervades it; and no less so, on the other hand, by its perspicuous and beautiful simplicity, its rational and uniform consistency throughout all its offices. The sound discretion of its Compilers affords abundant proof, that, in this important work, they were actuated by the only spirit that can ever render a reformation in matters appertaining to Religion really beneficial. We trace in it nothing of the hostility of sectarian prejudice; nothing of rash and crude innovation. The Ritual of the *Romish* Church, though composed in the Latin tongue, and clogged with many superstitious and exceptionable forms, was yet, in many parts of it, truly Scriptural, and well calculated for the comfort and edification of pious worshippers. The first object, therefore, with our Reformers, was, to purge it of its manifold errors, that it might be rendered more conformable to the standard of Scripture Truth, and to

the practice of the purest ages of the Church: the next was, to render it more generally edifying, by translating it into our own language. The peculiar *Doctrines* of the Church of Rome were the first great object of reformation: the *Liturgy*, for the most part, required only to be cleared of those Doctrines, and made intelligible to the whole community. Accordingly, some of the most admired parts of our Book of Common Prayer are taken almost literally from the Romish Ritual: and this, far from being any just objection to it, proves that the Compilers were guided by the genuine spirit of moderation and Christian candour.

On the other hand, they were firm and resolute in expunging from the Public Service, whatever appeared contrary to the Word of God, or liable to misconstruction. This was done with a cautious, but steady hand. Purity of worship cannot consist with any approach to *idolatrous* practices. Every thing, therefore, relating to the adoration of the Host, to the worshipping of Images, to the invocation of Saints, or of the Blessed Virgin, and other such like unscriptural devotions, was totally and unequivocally rejected. Even such ceremonies, or peculiar modes of expression, as had a *tendency* to lead men

into these errors, were laid aside; and others were substituted in their stead, which could not be a stumblingblock, or just cause of offence, to any considerate or sober-minded person. Many excellent prayers, collects, thanksgivings, and occasional forms, were also introduced, not only highly useful as offices of devotion, but exceedingly beneficial to those who use them, by the religious instruction they convey. Thus our Liturgy, in its present reformed state, is a most valuable repository of Christian knowledge. It serves as a manual of Faith and Practice: nor can any person be thoroughly conversant with its contents, without finding his understanding enlightened, his thoughts spiritualized, and his heart improved.

The *comprehensiveness* of our Liturgy is another powerful recommendation in its favour. It contains devotions adapted to all persons, under all circumstances, and in all conditions of life. Every blessing that we *ought* to desire, temporal or spiritual, we are here instructed to pray for. Every offence that we have committed, or are liable to commit; and every evil that can befall us, either in body or soul; is here solemnly deprecated. Every duty that we owe to God, our neighbour, or ourselves, is either distinctly incul-

cated, or evidently implied, in some part or other of this admirable compilation. Yet is the whole daily service so unencumbered with tautology and needless repetitions, that it would be difficult to point out any considerable portion of it, which could be omitted without curtailing it of some precept, some instruction, or some petition, generally necessary, or expedient.

Such was the zeal, the purity, the moderation, of the Reformers of the Church of England: and hence that equality, at least, if not preeminence, which it may justly challenge, in comparison with any other Church in Christendom. There is, indeed, satisfactory evidence, that our Church had a Liturgy of its own, long before the Papal Usurpation; a Liturgy, in use by our British ancestors, and formed, like that of the ancient Gallican Church, upon the model of the earliest Christian Fathers. Much of this ancient Ritual was, no doubt, retained in the Romish Breviary, or Missal: and the labour of our Reformers appears to have been directed to the restoration of *that* Ritual to its pristine state; clearing it of those corruptions, which had been engrafted upon it by Papal Superstition; but by no means abandoning the whole, as if nothing that the Church of Rome had

approved might be tolerated by a Protestant Community. Accordingly, in the preface to our Book of Common Prayer, it is declared to have been "the wisdom of the Church of "England, ever since the first compiling of "her Public Liturgy, to keep the *mean* be-"twixt the extremes, of too much stiffness in "*refusing*, and too much easiness in *admit-*"*ting*, any variation from it."

The spirit which animated some *other* of the reformed Churches, was not altogether of so unexceptionable a character. Impressed with just indignation at the corruptions of the Church of Rome, they seem to have thought it impossible to separate from her too widely; and, in their zeal against existing abuses, to have forgotten, that to *reform* is not to *destroy*. Hence, the primitive Ordinances, and even the primitive Faith, of the purest ages of Christianity, were, in several instances, rudely shaken, or inconsiderately abandoned. In some, *Episcopacy* was abolished, and, with it, many essential qualifications of the Priesthood. Others proscribed the use of pre-composed *Liturgies*. Almost all, in some particulars, relinquished usages sanctioned by primitive, nay, even apostolical practice. Nor can we observe without regret, that the greater part of those heresies and

schisms, which gave the enemies of the Reformation so great occasion to bring it into discredit, were the offspring of those Churches, who, by carrying the supposed work of Reformation too far, and urging it, under all circumstances, with indiscriminate zeal, loosened the very principles on which it ought to have rested, and made an opening for that inundation of licentiousness and disorder which afterwards ensued.

The spirit, therefore, of what is sometimes called *Reform* in these our days, joined with our experience of the past, should operate as a warning of the danger of yielding to any *further* suggestions of *improvement* in matters of Religion, unless an absolute necessity for them can be shewn; and unless they can also be shewn to be perfectly compatible with the preservation of that order in the Christian Church, and those Sacred Institutions belonging to it, the continuance of which is indispensable to the maintenance of the Faith itself. But the objections raised by the far greater number of modern advocates of Reform, are of a kind which appear to have much more than this in view. The *doctrines* of the Church are impugned; its *authority* is questioned; its *discipline* is set at nought. Objections striking so deeply at the *root* of

our Establishment, can hardly with safety be taken into consideration. To remove *them*, would be to destroy the Church itself: and although the proposed amendments may come recommended to us under so specious a form as not immediately to betray their real tendency; yet, from a review of the avowed principles of those who press them the most eagerly, and from the connection they maintain with persons in open hostility to our Establishment, little doubt can be entertained of the end proposed by such innovations, or of the consequences which would ultimately follow.

Upon the preservation, then, of our excellent *Liturgy*, depends, in a great measure, the preservation of the Church of England: and although its framers and compilers laid no claim to *Infallibility*, nor can any one be so blindly attached to it, as to suppose it absolutely perfect, or incapable of any improvement; yet we may confidently assert, that it contains nothing that can give just offence to those who believe in its *doctrines;* and those who disbelieve its doctrines, are bound in the first place to disprove the truth of *them*, before they plead for such an alteration in our Liturgical offices as would adapt them to their own opinions.

From this brief statement of the high authority of our Church Service, as well as of its great intrinsic value and utility, we may perceive how necessary it is, for the general welfare of the Church, and for the personal edification of its members, that it should be regarded as one main bulwark of the Christian Faith among us; and more especially that it should form the groundwork of our *National Education*. For, though it be perfectly true (as was said by the great Chillingworth, in his controversy with Papists) that "*the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants;*"—because from thence is derived all that is essential to our Faith or Practice;—yet the very *importance* of that Sacred Book renders it necessary, that the greatest possible care should be taken to prevent its *perversion* or *misconstruction*, by those who are to profit from its instructions. Now, although different communities of Christians have unfortunately maintained different *interpretations* of many parts of Holy Writ; it is to be presumed, that every particular community believes *that* to be the *right* one, which itself professes. *That* only, therefore, can, by such a community, be conscientiously taught to its several members. So that, without any breach of Christian Charity towards

those who dissent from us; and without any desire to interfere with their peculiar modes of worship, or of instruction, among themselves; we may with propriety insist upon this, (as a necessary test, on the part of *our own* Church-members,) that the Scriptures be taught in conformity with *that* interpretation of them, which our public forms of Worship recognise and sanction. A departure from this rule savours of *inconsistency*, at least; if it does not indicate some bias towards religious *Error*, or religious *Indifference*.

And here it may be observed, that, with these evidences before us of the excellencies of our Liturgy, and its value both as a repository of Christian doctrine, and a guide to Christian conduct; we may well wonder that any among us should still complain of the want of *Evangelical* light in this favoured country. We may well express some astonishment, that there should be found, even within the pale of our own Establishment, some who, constituting themselves judges of what is Evangelical Doctrine, hold all these advantages in little estimation; nay, who seem to think that the Gospel has almost departed from the *Church*, and is to be found only in the *Conventicle*.

Without entering into a particular refuta-

tion of this charge; (a charge, certainly the heaviest that can be brought against any Christian community;) it may be observed, that they who bring such an accusation against *our* Church, will have much to do before they can substantiate it by satisfactory proof. They must shew what article of Christian *Doctrine*, what point of Christian *Duty*, what *Scriptural motive* to either is not inculcated, or not correctly stated, in our public *Confessions of Faith*, and in our *Book of Common Prayer*. They must shew, wherein our *Catechism* misleads the youthful learner; wherein our Administration of the *Sacraments* is corrupt and defective; wherein any parts of our *Ritual* offend against the Apostle's rule, that we should "pray with the "Spirit, and pray with the Understanding "also." Or they must bring evidence to prove, that the great body of our Parochial Clergy, from the Reformation to the present time;—including some of the most illustrious names that ever adorned the annals of Ecclesiastical History;—have been either so ignorant, or so regardless of their obligations, as to preach, not only what is inconsistent with the pure Word of God, but what is irreconcilable with their own *Ordination Vows*, and with those very forms of Public Worship

which they were solemnly pledged to use, and which, in fact, they must have used, whenever they officiated in their Ministerial Functions. Unless some, or all, of these charges can be proved, no necessity can be shewn for relinquishing Communion with our Church, for the sake of participating the light of the Gospel. On the contrary, we are warranted in affirming, that in every Parish in the kingdom, *that* light may be enjoyed, within the bosom of our Church. Its Services may be more or less attentively performed; its Ministers may be more or less skilful in the exposition of Scripture-truths; but still *the means of Grace and Salvation* are supplied; the *Scriptures* are read; *Confessions, Supplications, Thanksgivings*, are offered up; *Sacraments* are administered; *Infants* are *baptized;* Youth are *catechized;* the more advanced in knowledge are brought to *Confirmation;* the *Holy Eucharist* is tendered to every faithful Communicant; the *Sick* are visited; the *Dead* are committed to the Grave with consolatory and edifying Devotions. Thus, through every stage of life, and under all its various circumstances and conditions, the Church accompanies her members with spiritual guidance and direction adapted to every exigency. And shall we

think lightly of these advantages? Shall we ungratefully complain, that we are still in darkness, and must seek elsewhere for light to guide our steps? Shall we not rather acknowledge, with heartfelt satisfaction, the abundant measure of spiritual blessings bestowed upon us, and think what a fearful account we shall hereafter have to give, if we despise or neglect them?

If, then, we would render the most substantial and permanent benefits to ourselves, and to the community of which we are members, let our zeal in spiritual concerns be regulated according to that sober, discreet, and practical system of piety which our Church thus sets before us. "It is good," says St. Paul, "*to be zealously affected always in a* "*good thing:*" but the same Apostle elsewhere censures them who have a zeal that is "*not according to knowledge.*" Zeal, even for the *dissemination of the Scriptures*, ought, therefore, to be regulated by sound judgment, as to the best and surest *means* of rendering them *profitable to Salvation.* Men must be taught to *read the Scriptures*, as they are taught to *pray;* "with the *Spirit*, and with "the *Understanding* also." They must be taught, that in neither case ought they to trust to wild and fanatical expectations of

spiritual illumination from above, while they neglect the ordinary provision that is made for their improvement in both, by the external ordinances of the Church. On the other hand, they must be duly admonished, that, in *both* cases, "neither he that planteth is "any thing, neither he that watereth, but "God that giveth the increase." The "*Spi-*"*rit of God*" must "help their infirmities," and "purify their affections," before they can render him any acceptable service. But those who are best instructed *how* to pray to Him for that heavenly Grace, those who are brought up in that mode of worship, and those habits of practical piety, which are necessary to entitle them to the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, will be rendered most *capable* of profiting by His holy Word, and of securing to themselves an inheritance in His everlasting kingdom.

There can, indeed, be no doubt, that the Scriptures "are able" to make every man "*wise unto Salvation;*" and that, when they are faithfully interpreted and applied, they will not fail in their effect. But if (as has been shewn in a former Discourse) some *Guide* be necessary to assist in their interpretation and application; where shall we find a *safer* Guide than in the Liturgy and

other public Formularies of our Church? Where shall we find more fervour of rational Piety, more practical elucidation of Christian Doctrine, more effectual security against Error, more comprehensive views of Evangelical Truth?—With confidence, then, may we ourselves pursue, and invite others to pursue, the path thus marked out to Eternal Life. Whatever may be their calling or condition, they who thus study the Scriptures will thence be instructed, "*therein to* "*abide with God.*" They will learn to "adorn "the doctrine of God their Saviour in all "things:" and, whether a greater or a lesser recompense may await them in this earthly state, they will be "rich in faith, and heirs "of the promises;" full of hope in this life, and prepared for immortality in the next.

SERMON II.[a]

ROMANS xiv. 7.

None of us liveth to himself.

A STRANGE opinion has sometimes been entertained, that the Christian Religion is at variance with the temporal interests of mankind. It has been supposed to inculcate principles of an unsocial tendency; principles, inconsistent with those ties by which mankind are bound to each other in the relationships of civil and domestic life, and tending to habits of inactivity or selfishness destructive of that spirit of enterprise on which the political and moral improvement of large communities essentially depends. Hence it has been represented as discouraging both patriotism and friendship; as requiring a renunciation of personal attachments, and prohibiting that regard for our national honour and prosperity, without which it is hardly to be conceived that individuals will be induced to labour for the public good. Thus it has

[a] Preached before The Corporation of Trinity House, in the Church of St. Nicholas, Deptford, June 10, 1816.

been made to assume an aspect the most repulsive to all who are not willing to divest themselves of some of the strongest and best feelings of our nature.

That such representations should be made by those who are professedly hostile to Revealed Religion, is no more than might be expected. But it may justly excite astonishment, that they should have been countenanced by those who would be thought most zealous in promoting its true interests, and most desirous to exalt its character to the highest pitch. Yet such has been the treatment that Christianity has experienced, both from friends and foes. It has been reviled and ridiculed, on the one hand, for its supposed moroseness and misanthropy: it has been extolled, on the other hand, for its power of abstracting the mind from all earthly concerns, and fixing it *exclusively* on spiritual objects: while by others, again, apparently not actuated either by any enmity to its design, or by any enthusiastic fondness for visionary schemes of life, this imaginary peculiarity in its character has been urged as a grave and weighty argument of its Divine original.

It may be difficult to determine which of these different speculatists would, if their opinions were to become general, do the

greatest disservice to Revealed Religion. It is not difficult, however, to shew that neither of them are warranted, in their respective opinions, by the system itself which they thus misrepresent or misconceive. Were we called upon to defend Christianity against some of the most formidable assaults of Infidelity, or to combat the errors of some of its most injudicious professors, we could hardly make our stand upon firmer ground, than upon the full and substantial evidence that may be produced of its beneficial influence upon the *social* as well as *personal* interests of mankind. We might safely challenge for Christianity the strictest scrutiny into all its precepts concerning the relative duties between man and man, and the severest comparison of it, in this respect, with any system of philosophical morality. Nay, were we required to frame a code of maxims, the most perfectly adapted to every existing, or every possible, combination of human circumstances, the Christian scheme would supply us with the *only* sure basis on which it should be raised. Nor need we seek further for a foundation-stone of the whole edifice, than the aphorism in the text, "None of us liveth to "himself."

Whether this maxim be interpreted with

reference to the duty we owe to God, or that which we owe to man, it is equally incontrovertible. St. Paul, indeed, applies it, first, and more expressly, to the *former;* intimating, that no man hath a right to live according to *his own* will and inclination, but must submit to regulate his conduct by the *will of God.* But he shews also its application to the *latter*, by the use he subsequently makes of it in exhorting Christians to "follow after "the things which make for peace, and things "wherewith one may edify another[a]." And these interpretations are in perfect unison. For, as our duty to God is our paramount obligation as reasonable beings, so is it the *foundation* of our relative duties to one another: and *both* coincide in this as their first principle, that "none of us liveth to himself."

This, then, may be considered as the central point of all the social virtues. From this they diverge in every direction, extending from nearer to more remote connections, and knowing no boundary within the sphere of human exertion. The principle is first developed in the exercise of filial piety. It thence proceeds, through the several gradations of kindred and friendly intercourse, to wider relations of society; from personal to

[a] Ver. 19.

local interests, and to those which are common to us as fellow-citizens and subjects of the State. Nor does it terminate here; but goes on, as means and opportunities are afforded, to the most enlarged philanthropy and zeal for the general good of mankind.

Correspondent with these different spheres of action, the Great Author of our nature hath implanted within us affections and interests, which prompt us in each of them to promote the good of others as well as of ourselves. Sympathies of conjugal, parental, and filial tenderness, of friendship, of patriotism, and of universal benevolence, serve as perpetual incitements to discharge the respective duties connected with them. Nor do these, when properly defined and regulated, interfere with each other's operations; but rather lend a mutual aid. Pursuing the order of nature and the simplest suggestions of reason, the practice of those duties which spring from the *nearest* relationships of life, will strengthen, not diminish, the disposition to a more *extended* benevolence. These closer and more intimate connections afford opportunity for the constant exercise of the finer feelings of our nature, and the daily reciprocation of good offices, by which many asperities of the temper are gradually worn down, and a habit

is formed of general kindness and good-will. Hence, they who have best cultivated, in the smaller circles of private intercourse, the dispositions which endear men to each other, will be most sensible of the value of such dispositions when operating more diffusively, and will probably best know how to render them productive of public benefit. On the other hand, a just regard to those strong and ardent feelings which almost universally attach men to their native country; and even that sentiment of general philanthropy which attaches us to man *as man*, and prompts us, without local or personal considerations, when we have opportunity, to do good unto ALL; will serve to prevent the more limited affections from degenerating into a selfish spirit, and becoming detrimental to the public good.

It is by the happy union and due subordination of these instinctive propensities, (if such they may be called,) that the real welfare of individuals, of families, of neighbourhoods, of national communities, and eventually of the whole human race, will be best secured. Vain and visionary are the theories of those sciolists in human nature, who propose schemes of *universal philanthropy*, apart from all connection with ties of a closer kind;

inverting the very order of nature, and calling upon men to sacrifice primary to secondary duties, and practicable to impracticable good. Nor less pernicious in their tendency are those opposite theories, which make *self-love*, however refined, the sole law of man's nature, and the measure of his duty; teaching him that no other regard is due to his fellow-creatures, than that which originates and terminates in his own personal interest or gratification.

To neither of these extremes does the Christian Religion give countenance. It tends not to the waste of moral and intellectual energies on projects indefinite and unattainable; neither does it sanction the individual in a slothful neglect, or a selfish appropriation, of the talents which he possesses. No field is too wide for the application of its principles; none too circumscribed to admit of their operation. Whether the relation be nearer or more remote, the correspondent duty is distinctly recognised, and the performance of it specifically enjoined. Thus, to obey parents, magistrates, and all who are in authority[b];—to "honour all men, love the brotherhood, "fear God, and honour the King[c];"—to "do

[b] Eph. vi. 1. Col. iii. 22. Tit. iii. 1. Heb. xiii. 17.
[c] 1 Pet. ii. 17.

"unto all men as we would they should do "unto us[d];"—these, among many others with which the Sacred Writings abound, are injunctions declaratory of our duty in the various departments of social life:—and it requires no elaborate argument to prove that these, if practised to their full extent, could not but operate to promote both collective and individual happiness.

When, therefore, it is objected as a defect in Scripture-Ethics, or when it is urged in defence of systems incompatible with the character of man as a social being, that the Sacred Writings do not expressly inculcate patriotism and friendship as Christian duties; it seems to be forgotten, that every thing which can render either of these really a virtue, is again and again enforced; and that our blessed Lord, who is the great Exemplar of a holy life, illustrated both in his own conduct. He shared the sorrows of his personal associates; and he affectionately bewailed the approaching calamities of his fellow-countrymen. He wept over Jerusalem, and he wept for Lazarus. Nor are the injunctions of the Apostles less adapted than our Lord's example to give a sanction to these virtues. Doubtless, he is the truest

[d] Matt. vii. 12.

friend, who follows St. Paul's maxim, "Re-"joice with them that do rejoice, and weep "with them that weep[e];" who "comforts the "feeble-minded, and supports the weak[f];" who exercises forgiveness, forbearance, candour, truth, sincerity; and who instructs by example, as well as by admonition. Doubtless, also, he is the truest *patriot*, who best practises the Apostolical precept, "Let no "man seek his own, but every man another's "wealth[g];" who applies the rule, "Love the "brotherhood," to the whole community of which he is a member; who faithfully "ren-"ders to all their dues[h];" who is "subject to "principalities and powers, and obeys magi-"strates[i];" who "knows both how to abound, "and how to suffer need[k];" and who best discharges the duties of his station, whatever that station may be. By such instructions as these, our Lord and his Apostles have taught us our duty as members one of another; not encouraging irrational and indiscriminate affections towards individuals or towards the State, but inculcating such principles, and prescribing such rules of conduct, as most effectually subserve the interests of both.

[e] Rom. xii. 15. [f] 1 Thess. v. 14. [g] 1 Cor. x. 24.
[h] Rom. xiii. 7. [i] Titus iii. 1. [k] Phil. iv. 12.

Nor let it be overlooked, that these principles are by the Christian Religion fixed on a firmer basis, and supported by stronger sanctions, than any on which they could otherwise be rested. They issue from the Divine Will, and are enforced by Divine Authority. They depend not on human caprice for their recompense, nor on human power for their effect. They are now become *religious*, as well as *moral* duties. Hence arise new views of their value and importance; the desire of promoting the public welfare being immediately connected with that of obedience to the Divine will. "Brethren," says St. Paul, "let "every man, wherein he is called, therein "abide with God[1]:"—that is, let him, in his proper station, actively exert himself for the good of the community, under a just sense of responsibility to the Almighty for every part of his conduct. Let him consider it as the ordinance of God, that "none of us liveth to "himself;" that his household, his friends, his country, all have claims upon his exertions; and that to withhold from any of these the benefit of his services, is to deprive them of their due. Let him also consider, that, whatever be his worldly calling, he may

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 20.

and ought so to demean himself in it, as to shew that he does not undervalue his *Christian* calling;—he must "abide in it *with God*." Thus his temporal and spiritual concerns will mutually be advanced. Religion will be intermingled with his daily occupations; promoting, not obstructing, his public utility; and, in every point of view, enhancing his value as a member of Society.

The Scriptures, indeed, abound in precepts which can only be fulfilled in active and social life. They abound also in commendations of persons who were occupied in stations demanding constant intercourse with mankind, and involving a continual succession of worldly business. They make frequent mention of princes, nobles, statesmen, legislators, soldiers, mariners, traffickers of various description; nor is it ever surmised that these occupations were an hinderance to their spiritual progress. Examples, moreover, in subsequent times, have never been wanting, in every rank and profession, of persons who have distinguished themselves by blending religious duties with an unremitting and successful application to secular concerns, and who have by such conduct attained to the highest public estimation. These are invaluable testimonies to the practical influence of

pure Religion on the general interests of Society.

The Christian Patriot is, indeed, the character to which, of all others, the highest meed of public praise is due. And, perhaps, in no country is the value of this character more justly appreciated than in our own. The best interests of the State are among us so interwoven with those of Religion, that the one can hardly suffer, without some injury to the other. In almost all our great National Institutions, this connection is either expressly acknowledged or implied. The stability of the Throne itself is made to depend upon it. It is recognised in our whole code of jurisprudence, and pervades, not only the forms, but the substance, of all our proceedings in Courts of Judicature. It is a prominent feature in our supplications for the Great Council of the Nation. It is diffused through the whole mass of the Community. Scarcely a Charitable Institution, scarcely any work of Public Utility, which does not openly testify its sense of dependence upon the Divine blessing for the success of its designs. Such is the general homage paid, *externally* at least, among us, to the ascendancy of Religion in the regulation of our temporal concerns.

The occasion on which we are now assembled affords an instance strongly illustrative of these observations.

The general design of the Institution before us comprehends so large a field of good, that it is difficult to say what interests, public or private, collective or individual, it may not, in the wide range of its influence, eventually promote. How much our political preeminence is involved in the main objects to which its attention is directed, it is needless to detail. It is evident, that to our maritime superiority we owe not only our great financial resources, but also much of that spirit of hardihood, enterprise, and valour, which gives to nations a preponderating influence: and it is no less evident, that our superiority in this respect is only to be attained and preserved by unremitting attention to the concerns of our domestic Navigation. But, apart from this great national view of the subject, the peculiar advantages, and the peculiar exigencies, of our *insular* situation affect, directly or indirectly, every member of the body politic. Through the various channels of Society, however remote or obscure, the vast influence of our commercial greatness is, and must be, felt. To this we owe, more or less, whatever addition to the necessaries, comforts,

and conveniencies of life (to say nothing of its luxuries and superfluities) we derive from the produce of other countries: whilst to the demand from other countries for similar supplies, we owe one great encouragement to that industry, ingenuity, and labour, which are devoted to raising the produce of our own soil, or to manufacturing it for general use. Without commerce, these pursuits must languish, these advantages be lost, these exigencies be unprovided for. Whatever improvement or facility can be given to the Navigation of our coasts, thus contributes to increase the number of our enjoyments, and the sum of our national welfare.

If in any case, then, the maxim, "None of "us liveth to himself," may be emphatically urged, it is in claiming support for such an Institution as this; where the sphere of utility is enlarged to an extent incalculable, and the whole community participates in the benefits which it diffuses; so that every one among us has reason to apply to it the language of the Psalmist, and say, "For my brethren and "companions' sake, I will wish Thee prosper-"ity[m]." Nor are these benefits limited even to our own country. For, as commercial intercourse produces a constant interchange of

[m] Psalm cxxii. 8.

good offices and substantial advantages between Nations which would otherwise be inaccessible to each other, so it cannot but be an advantage of no ordinary kind, to foreign nations, to be brought thus into contact with our own, and to profit by our extensive resources. Here, therefore, our views may be enlarged to the compass of the whole civilized world, as deriving substantial benefit from that which so signally marks our national character.

Closely connected, however, with these benefits, are others of a still higher kind. Whatever facilitates the intercourse between nations, for the supply of their *temporal* exigencies, strengthens at the same time the *social* ties of our common nature, and affords opportunities for the improvement of the *moral* character. Our natural *self-love*, so apt to transgress its just bounds, is corrected by the interest and the pleasure that are experienced in an enlarged communication with our fellow-creatures. Our *benevolent* affections are strengthened in the same proportion. Even the *hostile* feelings of our nature take a beneficial direction; and a rivalship of dominion and warfare, gives place to a rivalship in pursuits conducive to the general good. Hence nations learn rightly

to estimate the blessings of peace. Hence, also, individuals learn the invaluable truths, that no man's happiness is, or can be, entirely independent of others; that all stand in need of each other for their own individual good; that as "the eye cannot say unto the hand, I "have no need of thee; nor the head to the "feet, I have no need of you[n];" so, in the great body of human society, it is manifestly the ordinance of God, that all should be instrumental to their own and the general welfare, by a faithful discharge of their personal duties, and by co-operation with each other.

Nor may we omit to notice a still more important circumstance, that the sacred truths of Revealed Religion find thus access to countries where they would otherwise be unknown. With the spirit of commerce and of colonization may go forth the laudable desire of bringing into the fold "other sheep," who have never yet heard the voice of the "Great "Shepherd." To the blessings of civilization and social order may be superadded those of that pure and undefiled Religion, which can alone instruct men how to improve those blessings to the highest and noblest ends.

[n] 1 Cor. xii. 21.

Discreet and well-regulated zeal may avail itself of the favourable prepossessions wrought by *temporal* good offices, to subdue the prejudices of ignorant superstition, and to substitute for them higher hopes and purer practices, founded on the basis of rational conviction and an enlightened Faith.

These moral and spiritual blessings the genuine Philanthropist (guided by the steady light of sober truth and sound discernment, not by the false glare of enthusiastic vanity) would delight to contemplate, even if more remotely connected than they really are, with an Establishment which so largely contributes to spead far and wide the knowledge of the British name. Subordinate, however, to these, are many *charitable* purposes immediately connected with it, which, without reference to views of greater magnitude, would amply entitle it to a place in the foremost rank of our national designs. The life of the *Mariner* is unavoidably a life of peril and of toil; of peril, which no human skill or foresight can altogether provide against; of toil, which knows not the regular and periodical intermissions by which most other occupations are relieved. Whatever tends to lessen the magnitude of the former, or to provide a fit recompense for the latter, is a debt of bene-

volence, of gratitude, nay, of justice, to those who devote their lives to such a service.

I deem it wholly unnecessary to occupy the time of those who hear me, in specifying the *means* by which these important objects are rendered attainable, through this ancient and venerable Corporation; which, originating in views the most patriotic and benevolent, has progressively enlarged its designs, receiving from the Government of the country a continued encouragement and support, highly creditable to our national character. The very extensive provisions made for lighting our Coasts, for marking the safest course of Navigation, and for ensuring the ready aid of skilful Pilots to act on every occasion of distress or danger, leave nothing unattended to in the main department of its operations:—while its noble eleemosynary establishments for the retreat of exhausted veterans in these labours, and the pensionary relief afforded to multitudes of their distressed families, abundantly shew that the ample resources of the Institution are not less laudably expended, than they have been judiciously bestowed.

Reverting, then, to the subject taken for the groundwork of these observations; we have here a proud and gratifying proof of what may be effected by a great political and

Christian State, when its energies are put forth for the public good;—a proof that Christianity neither weakens those energies, nor obstructs their operation; but rather gives additional vigour to the Patriot passion, and enlarged scope to real Philanthropy.

With this impresson on our minds, let it be our endeavour, individually, as well as jointly, to preserve inviolable the connection between genuine Benevolence and pure Religion; — to discountenance those theories which, by separating the one from the other, would diminish the effect of both; to venerate those Establishments which, being founded on the solid basis of Christian duty, are the ornament and support of our country, and may be expected to survive the wreck of ages;—and lastly, to shew our sense of such blessings, by endeavouring to transmit them unimpaired to posterity, and by "letting our "light so shine before men, that they may "see our good works, and glorify our Father "which is in Heaven[o]."

The effect of such conduct upon the *public* weal requires no further illustration. Nor is its advantage to ourselves, *individually*, less clear and certain. It will enable us so to

[o] Matt. v. 16.

pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. "Our fruit will "be unto holiness, and the end everlasting "life[p]."

[p] Rom. vi. 22.

SERMON III.[a]

PROVERBS xix. 2.

That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good.

AMONG the benefits resulting from a due cultivation of the intellectual powers, it may be questioned, whether those which accrue to the individual possessor, or those which the community at large derive from them, be of the greater value. Certain it is, that the advantages on both sides are *reciprocal;* that whatever of good is experienced in the personal acquisition of knowledge, diffuses itself, more or less perceptibly, through the entire mass of society; while the improvement thence communicated to the public is reflected back upon the possessor in a proportionate degree. A double motive, therefore, is presented for labouring after those attainments, which not only adorn and dignify our nature, but mul-

[a] Preached in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, June 8, 1820, at the yearly Meeting of the Children educated in the Charity Schools in and about the Cities of London and Westminster.

tiply the sources of rational enjoyment, and lay the surest foundation of social and of personal well-being.

The Royal Preacher largely descants upon the influence of Wisdom and Knowledge in both these respects. He ascribes to them the true honour of states and of individuals, public welfare and private worth, every thing which gives preeminence to the one, or stability to the other.

The concurrent voice of mankind has confirmed these sentiments. They who have made the largest acquisitions of human knowledge will, indeed, be the most ready to confess its limits and its imperfections: but for such measure of it as they have found to be attainable, they will never cease to be thankful. Like the "merchant-man seeking goodly "pearls[a]," they will sell all that they have to purchase it, nor will they exchange it for any other treasure that the world can give.

But, in forming this judgment of the worth of Knowledge, we shall dangerously err, unless we affix to it the same meaning, and assign to it the same modifications, which are attached to it by Solomon himself. In *his* writings, Knowledge *then only* becomes the subject of eulogy, when associated with that

[a] Matt. xiii. 45.

RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE, which stamps its real value. Separated from *this*, he affirms, that "in much wisdom is much grief; and he that "increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow[b]." So invariably does he blend Religion with Knowledge, and Irreligion with Ignorance, as to render them almost convertible terms. Nor is this peculiar to the Royal Preacher. It is common to all the Sacred Penmen; and forms a marked distinction between the writings composed under the influence of Divine Inspiration, and those which have no higher pretensions than human authority.

With this clue to its interpretation, the maxim in the Text offers an important subject of inquiry, not unsuitable to the present occasion. It leads to the consideration of two points immediately connected with the design of such charitable Institutions as those which we are now assembled to promote;—the evils of Ignorance,—and the means of removing those evils:—"That the soul be "without knowledge, it is not good."

That Solomon had in contemplation the state of those, whose lowly circumstances in life debar them from the ordinary opportunities of acquiring knowledge, may be inferred from the context. "Better is the *poor*

[b] Eccles. i. 18.

"that walketh in his integrity, than he that "is perverse in his lips, and is a fool. Also, "that the soul be without knowledge, it is "not good; and he that hasteth with his "feet, sinneth. The foolishness of man per-"verteth his way, and his heart fretteth "against the Lord[c]."

The honest simplicity of the unlettered Poor is here, in the first place, advantageously contrasted with the perverse ingenuity of those, who, possessing better means of improvement, misapply their talents or acquirements to evil purposes; such men as those, of whom the Apostle affirms, that "profess-"ing themselves to be wise, they become "fools[d]." But though uncorrupt Ignorance be thus preferable to perverted Knowledge, yet, says the Preacher, "that the soul be "without knowledge, *it is not good:*" and he adds the reason;—"he that hasteth with "his feet, sinneth. The foolishness of man "perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth "against the Lord." Through want of knowledge, and necessary discernment of what is good or evil for them, men act blindly and precipitately, and fall into destructive errors. And, when they have thus brought misery upon themselves, instead of acknowledging

[c] Vers. 1—3. [d] Rom. i. 22.

that their own folly has been the cause, their hearts "fret against the Lord;" they become fretful and discontented, arraign the dispensations of Providence, and readily yield to those temptations to evil, with which poverty and distress continually assail the undisciplined mind.

We are taught, then, the necessity of providing against the evils, not of *Ignorance* only, but also of *false Knowledge:*—of that Knowledge which "puffeth up[e]," but doth not "edify;" that which engenders rashness and presumption, but neither improves the judgment to avoid dangers, nor gives strength to overcome them. To combat *both* these evils is the great object of Christian Education.

Absolute *Ignorance*, whether or not it be a state of positive misery, is certainly not that state which the Almighty designed for man. The faculties bestowed upon us, the objects presented to our contemplation, the sources of instruction laid open to our view, the enjoyments of which we are made susceptible, all indicate the will of our Creator, that we should progressively advance in mental as in bodily strength, and receive, even in this life, a competency of intellectual and spiritual, as well as of animal gratification. If the means

[e] 1 Cor. viii. 1.

of such advancement be utterly denied to any individual; if this rational source of enjoyment be entirely closed against him; not only does life become a dreary and comfortless state of existence, but the character of the being who occupies it can never rise to its proper standard. Such is man, in what is called the *savage* state; a state, not, what Poets feign, or Philosophers vainly dream, of attractive innocence and simplicity, of pure affections, guileless hearts, and instinctive propensities to virtue and goodness; but, for the most part, of brutal lust and violence, of sordid habits, of wily and insidious cunning, and other characteristic tokens of the depravity inherent in our fallen nature, more and more debased by the continued want of culture and correction.

What men thus are collectively in the savage state, such also, in a great degree, are the individuals in civilized communities, upon whom no moral or intellectual discipline has been bestowed. Though they may partake of some of the benefits which the Institutions of Society diffuse through the general mass; and though, by the coercive operation of salutary Laws and judicial Penalties, their disorderly wills and affections may be restrained from much evil which

would otherwise ensue; yet these can work but ineffectually, where no higher and more potent remedies are applied. Nay, the contrast between such degraded members of the State, and those who enjoy the advantage of well-cultivated understandings, will render the wretchedness of the former so much more perceptible; and while it exhibits them almost as outcasts from the social body, it must proportionably quicken their sense of that wretchedness, and make them regard their happier fellow-members with emotions of envy, dissatisfaction, and ill-will. Hence, in countries where the distance between the high and low, the learned and the unlearned, is not filled up by some intermediate gradations, there may be observed a general propensity on the one hand to oppression and misrule, and on the other hand to disaffection and insubordination.

"That the soul," then, "be without knowledge, it is not good." It is neither good for the individual, nor good for the community. The ends of Society can be but very imperfectly, if at all, attained, where Ignorance prevails through any considerable portion of the State. Nor can any member of the body politic obtain his due share of the benefits of social life, where the first rudi-

ments of instruction are wanting to qualify him for their enjoyment.

But this evil is most severely felt in the want of that salutary influence upon the mind which RELIGION supplies. To "know how "to be abased, and how to abound; both to "be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, "and to suffer need[f];" is not the character of an untutored mind. Nor is it the character which results from *human* wisdom only. It springs from a higher source. It owes its origin to that "wisdom from above," which, while it enlightens the understanding, has power to control the will, and to regulate the affections; that, without which, the work of discipline, the real purpose of Education, can never take full effect.

This leads to the next great point for consideration,—What means may be most effectual for the removal of these evils.

Solomon intimates that there is a kind of learning productive of evil, rather than good: —"Cease, my son," says he, "to hear the in-"struction that causeth to err from the words "of knowledge[g]." The Prophet denounces, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good "evil; that put darkness for light, and light "for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and

[f] Phil. iv. 12. [g] Prov. xix. 27.

"sweet for bitter:" and adverting to one main cause of this perversion of the understanding, he adds, "Woe unto them that are "wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their "own sight[h]."

False Knowledge is, in many respects, worse than entire Ignorance. It not only leaves the possessor uninformed as to what it most behoves him to know; but it shuts up the avenues to better instruction. It preoccupies the space which should be more worthily filled. It inverts the order in which our several faculties were intended to exercise their functions. It renders reason the slave of passion, appetite the arbiter of the will. It dethrones the judgment, and sets up imagination in its stead. It bewilders the mind with false views of human life, leads it to expectations never to be realized, and, after a series of anxieties and disappointments, gives up its victims to vexation, despondency, and all the hateful passions which feelings undisciplined by religious control are wont to press upon the mind with overwhelming force.

To the prevalence of this false Knowledge, among those whose unfavourable circumstances enable them not to detect its delusions, may be ascribed the far greater

[h] Isa. v. 20, 21.

portion of those evils, moral and political, with which society has of late abounded in this and in other countries. The present is not, in the common acceptation of the term, an age of *Ignorance*. It is an age fruitful of knowledge of various kinds, and boastful of diffusing that knowledge to an extent incalculably beyond that which former ages had, perhaps, ever ventured to contemplate. So far as the mere *exercise of intellectual power* has been called forth, its claims are not to be gainsayed. It must be allowed, that never before were such pains taken, and successfully taken, to give to man, in the most depressed condition of his being, a consciousness of something nobler than mere animal instincts; a lively perception of that native force of intellect, which is common to all our species, though not always known or felt even by those who are as amply endowed with it as their fellows. That this sort of illumination is infinitely more extended now than heretofore, is not to be denied. And something it undoubtedly is, to have given men a juster estimate of their natural powers; to have impressed them with notions, or persuasions, which may render them more sensible of the true dignity of their nature, and of the place they hold in the scale of moral being.

But from this very circumstance arises a more imperious necessity of carefully attending to what yet remains to be accomplished. You may have taught man what he *is;* but you have yet to teach him what he *ought to be.* You may have shewn him that he has powers, that he has energies, of which he was before unconscious; but you have yet to direct him to their proper use. You may have put weapons into his hands; but whether to use them to his welfare or to his destruction, he may be still untaught. Should you stop here, and deem the work of Education completed merely by such a developement of his faculties, it may well be doubted, whether, both upon himself and upon society, you have not inflicted an evil, rather than bestowed a good. Until *discipline* has performed its work; until principles have been instilled, laws of conduct laid down, rules and maxims of life inculcated, with competent sanctions to enforce their observance; all that has previously been done will be but vain and ostentatious show. It will be just enough to create pride, self-sufficiency, disquietude, discontent; to arouse the corrupt appetencies of nature, and to add strength to every inordinate affection;—but it will provide no counterpoise to evil propensity, no prevailing motive, either

of restraint or of encouragement, to give to the mind a proper bias and direction.

It is dangerous, then, to imagine, that the work of Education consists entirely, or even principally, in applying means to unfold the powers of the human mind, or in giving an increased *momentum* to its natural activity. If nothing more than this were done, society would be left exposed to a formidable conflict between ungovernable spirits, each eager to exercise his strength and inclination in the pursuit of his own object, and the accomplishment of his own purpose, without regard to any general bond of mutual affection, or of moral influence. Peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, would still remain undefined and doubtful terms, or unsanctioned, at least, by any authority which could give them effectual sway.

To a similar state would every community be reduced, were the theories of those speculatists to be adopted, who would exclude, from institutions for the Education of the Poor, all *systematic* views of Religion; leaving, as it is pretended, matters of Faith and Worship to the *unbiassed* choice of every individual; as if nothing more were wanted, to determine the human will to what is right and true, than the free exercise of its own

inherent powers. But is this assumption warranted by observation and experience? Does it make due allowance for the known propensity within us to evil; for the severe trial which even the best-disciplined and the most perfect of human beings continually experience in counteracting this propensity? Is it not at variance with what the Scriptures declare of fallen man, and of his inability to will or to do what is good and acceptable, without that sufficiency which cometh from God only?

So far, indeed, is it from being true, that, by increasing the vigour and the expansion of the mental faculties, the necessity of systematic instruction in Religion is superseded; that, on the contrary, in proportion as their power is thus increased, is this necessity rendered more urgent. It is not in the nature of such faculties, and so excited, to remain inactive, or to be cold and listless when an object of pursuit is offered. The first plausible theory, whether true or false, which is presented to their contemplation, will engage attention; and, if it have any captivating features, will probably take strong hold of the affections; more especially, if it partake of those qualities which most readily fall in with the solicitations of appetite or passion.

The first and most essential point, therefore, is to satisfy the cravings of the mind with such knowledge as shall best conduce to its *moral*, as well as intellectual, strength. As the latter increases, the former must still be enabled to maintain its due ascendancy: and better were it, that the one should be circumscribed even within the narrowest limits, than that it should be suffered to range beyond the control of the other, under no guidance or direction but that of its own undisciplined propensities.

These observations shew the necessity of avoiding two opposite extremes.

The evils generally attendant upon *Ignorance* seem to have led some greatly to overrate the *degree* of knowledge which is requisite to a full participation of the benefits of social life. An *equalization* of knowledge is no less impracticable, and would be no less injurious to the best interests of society, than an equalization of rank and property. As there are "many members in the body, and "all members have not the same office[1];" so the degree of knowledge which is suitable, and even necessary to one, may be not only unnecessary, but unsuitable to another, and tend to disqualify him for the duties of his

[1] Rom. xii. 4.

station. But they who are most extravagant in their schemes for enlightening the whole mass of the people, are usually most inclined to depreciate the value of those attainments which are above their reach. Like the levellers of rank and property, they aim at accomplishing their purpose by lowering others as well as raising themselves: and learning in the one case, as wealth in the other, is made a subject of opprobrium and contempt. Thus the idol of the people, while he inflates their minds with vain confidence and self-sufficiency, endeavours to diminish their respect for any acquirements superior to their own; and deprives them of the benefit they might otherwise derive from deference to the judgment of those who are best qualified to direct them.

On the other hand, the evils attendant upon *false* knowledge, or knowledge *perverted* and *abused*, have induced many to conclude, that it were better to leave the Poor in a state almost destitute of mental cultivation, than to risk such fearful consequences. To these we may reply, that, to say nothing of the odious selfishness of such a sentiment, the expediency or inexpediency of withholding knowledge from the Poor, is a point which comes now *too late* to be considered. The

question, at the present moment, is not whether they shall be *instructed*, but *what kind of instruction* they shall receive. The work of cultivation has long been going on. New methods have been discovered of accelerating its progress. A sort of intellectual machinery has been applied, by which facilities are obtained for pouring in instruction, with a rapidity, and with a precision also, of which our forefathers had no conception. By these operations, the eyes of the young are opened, their ears are rendered quick to hear and understand, their curiosity is awakened, their appetite for knowledge excited, the things "to be desired to make them wise[k]" are eagerly sought, an inquisitive spirit is stirred up within them;—and if we withhold our endeavours to give these propensities and these endowments a beneficial tendency, what is to be expected, but that the enemy will take advantage of the golden opportunity, and give it that direction which will suit his insidious purpose? Under such circumstances, to retrograde is neither safe nor practicable. Perseverance is become necessary for self-defence. The machine is even now in motion; and upon the prudence and discretion

[k] Gen. iii. 6.

of the hand that guides it must the result depend.

Where, then, shall we find the medium between these extremes more happily secured, than in the Institutions which have grown out of our own venerable Church-Establishment;—whose *charity* assigns no limits to the work of Education but such as truth and consistency demand, and whose *prudence* suffers it to extend no farther than to what utility and expediency will warrant. Of that judicious zeal which so happily prevails, at the present juncture, among its most distinguished members, the animating scene now before us affords a splendid and indisputable proof. The piety of our forefathers, who laid the foundations of these excellent Schools for training the infant Poor of this great Metropolis in the ways of pure Religion and Virtue, is now receiving an abundant recompense in the no less faithful exertions of their posterity to fulfil so laudable a purpose. *They*, indeed, when they first formed these excellent designs, could neither have foreseen nor imagined the full extent of evil, against which their successors would have to contend, in protecting the young and inexperienced from the dangers which would beset them. None but those who have passed through such

scenes of disorganization, revolutionary confusion, impiety, and blasphemy, as have marked our own eventful times, could have fully appreciated the magnitude of the difficulties to be encountered. But they well knew, "that the soul be without knowledge, it is "not good." They were also well aware, that the only knowledge which, to the soul, is really *good*, is that which is in unison with pure and sound *Religion*. Full of this persuasion, they regarded our venerable Church as a sure and safe guide to the infant's steps. To that guide they committed the precious charge. To the fidelity of her Pastors, to the efficacy of her sacred Ordinances, to the instruction of her Rituals, to the labours of Teachers trained in her doctrine and discipline, and, above all, to the Divine Blessing upon these means and instruments of good, they looked, with undoubting confidence, for the prosperous issue of their labours.

If we who labour in the same vineyard persevere in the path which these our predecessors have trodden before us, their confidence will not have been in vain. Inexcusable indeed will be our neglect, if, with such motives to urge us, and with such means as we possess, the work were to fail through want of due support. We shall have neither

inexperience nor inability to plead, in excuse for such failure. We see and feel the dangers that beset us, and we have powerful weapons to overcome them. However numerous the host of adversaries, however perilous the warfare, our friends are many and active, our resources abundant, our forces commensurate to the dangers. And while there is a righteous Providence to direct the issue, who shall harbour the thought that Impiety and Irreligion are waging war against us *upon equal terms?*

Yet let our zeal be tempered with discretion, and our confidence with caution. These are inseparable from religious wisdom; and they are especially needful in the work of Education. The difference betwixt true and false Knowledge is not always marked by so broad and distinct a line of boundary, as to be obvious to an unpractised eye. Many a plausible opinion, many an unsubstantial theory, misleads the unwary and undiscerning by its promising aspect. The *teacher*, therefore, has need to be himself guided by more than his own individual judgment. Some *public standard of collective wisdom* is requisite, to give greater weight and certainty to his instructions than that of merely *personal* estimation. Every religious community may

reasonably insist upon this, as an imperative obligation; an obligation, which will not be questioned by any but those who are indifferent to the truth, or have formed no fixed principles of belief. Not only must that general knowledge of the Scriptures be required, which is the basis of all religious instruction; but also some sufficient warrant for their right *interpretation*. What this security shall be, can admit of no doubt in the mind of any consistent member of our Church-Establishment. The teacher of youth can be at no loss for an efficient guide to his labours, while he adheres faithfully to the line marked out for him by our Creeds and Articles, and Book of Common Prayer. With the Scriptures in the one hand, and these in the other, he who materially errs in the work of Instruction, must labour under some incapacity or disqualification which unfits him for the office he has undertaken. But, for his still further aid, the venerable Society, under whose auspices these Schools were originally instituted, and are still patronized and conducted, has provided such ample stores of elementary treatises on Christian Faith and Practice, that even the humblest conductor of the Parochial School, under such guidance, can hardly deviate from the right path.

I deem it unnecessary to press these subjects farther. The Institutions for which I plead sufficiently speak for themselves on all the most essential points that have been noticed. They guard equally against the evils of Ignorance, and the evils of mistaken or misapplied Instruction. They neither leave the soul "without knowledge;" nor do they infuse into it that knowledge which only "puffeth up;" much less, that which panders to its evil and corrupt propensities. The Wisdom which they inculcate, is that which "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to "be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, "without partiality, and without hypocrisy[l]." This is the Wisdom, this the Knowledge, which shall be "the stability of our times[m]." In promoting this, you will be Benefactors to your country and to yourselves, no less than to "these little ones," of whom it is not the will of your heavenly Father that any one "should perish[n]."

Go on, then, and prosper in the good work you have taken in hand for these objects of your tender care. Nor doubt of an abundant recompense. You are forwarding, as far as is permitted to human agency, the great pur-

[l] James iii. 17. [m] Isa. xxxiii. 6. [n] Matt. xviii. 14.

pose for which their Creator gave them a being, and for which their Redeemer lived and died. To apply to your humbler labours, what St. Paul said of his own and those of Apollos,—You are "planting;"—You are "watering;"—and GOD, in His good time, will "give the increase[o]."

[o] 1 Cor. iii. 6.

SERMON IV.[a]

1 Cor. ix. 22.

I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

In contemplating the progress of Christianity under the immediate guidance and direction of the Apostles, a wide field is opened to us of instructive observation, with reference to our continuation of the work which they so auspiciously began. The parallel will not, indeed, hold good in all respects, between their labours and ours, in prosecuting this great design. Without that extraordinary aid which *they* derived from above, we must be content to follow them at an immeasurable distance. Yet, notwithstanding this superior advantage, much appears to have been left to their own judgment and discretion, much to their individual talents, dispositions, and acquirements, in applying to ex-

[a] Preached before The Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, at their anniversary Meeting, in the parish Church of St. Mary le Bow, on Friday, Feb. 15, 1822.

isting circumstances the extraordinary powers they had received They are, therefore, still to be regarded as patterns for our imitation: and our conduct will then be most blameless, and afford the best prospect of success, when we most carefully adhere to those rules and maxims by which they invariably shaped their course.

In these, as in other respects, we cannot have a more unexceptionable authority than St. Paul himself. His education under the most learned of the Jewish scribes, his rooted attachment to the Jewish Law, his early prejudices against the Gospel as seemingly opposed to that Law, his zeal in the persecution of those who embraced the Christian faith, his sudden conversion to that faith which he had so vehemently withstood, and his subsequent labours in promoting its acceptance among both Jews and Gentiles, are points of character which command the special attention of all who are engaged in spreading the knowledge of Christian truth; since they furnish some of the most irrefragable arguments by which its certainty may be established.

But the point to which I would now more particularly direct your attention, is one which eminently distinguished this great prototype of Missionary preachers of the Gospel; and

upon which I purpose to ground some observations respecting the most rational and scriptural method of endeavouring to make converts to the Christian faith; such also as, I trust, will be found entirely to accord with the views and proceedings of that excellent Institution which we are here assembled to encourage and to promote.

The passage from which the words of the text are taken, represents the Apostle's different mode of conduct towards Jews and Gentiles; his endeavours to adapt his instructions to their respective habits, dispositions, and attainments; and his readiness to consult even their prepossessions and prejudices, in imparting to them the great truths committed to his charge:—"Unto the Jews "I became as a Jew, that I might gain the "Jews; to them that are under the law, as "under the law, that I might gain them that "are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without "law to God, but under the law of Christ,) "that I might gain them that are without "law. To the weak became I as weak, that "I might gain the weak: I am made all "things to all men, that I might by all "means"—that is, by each of these several means—"save some."

The best comment upon these words will be found in what is recorded of St. Paul by his companion and fellow-labourer St. Luke, and in the general tenor of his own writings.

The Decree of the memorable Synod at Jerusalem[b] (in which St. Paul himself bore a part) was conceived in the same spirit of forbearance and conciliation that is here expressed. It disclaimed the necessity of circumcision to the *Gentile* converts, but did not expressly prohibit it to *Jewish* proselytes; nor did it, on the other hand, prohibit to the Gentiles any customs but such as gave to the whole ritual of Heathen worship a character of the grossest enormity, or such as were peculiarly abhorrent to Jewish feelings. A rule was thus established, which, while it tended gradually to extinguish, on both sides, practices inconsistent with the pure and perfect spirit of the Gospel, tended also to bring both Jew and Gentile nearer to each other, in temper, in habits, in disposition, and in principle.

Conformably with the spirit of these injunctions, St. Paul allowed Timothy, born of a *Jewish* parent, to be circumcised[c]; but forbade it to Titus, born of *Heathen* parents[d]. In the former case, the omission of the rite

[b] Acts xv. 23—29. [c] Acts xvi. 1—3. [d] Gal. ii. 3.

would have given offence to the Jews; in the latter, a compliance with it would no less have offended the Heathen: and by refusing it in the one case, and granting it in the other, the great principle was secured, that in neither was it a matter of necessity, or of any actual validity. In like manner, the Apostle performed himself, and joined with others in performing, certain vows made in conformity with the Jewish law[e]: but he failed not to insist, in his discourses and his writings, upon the virtual abrogation of these rites, and their total inefficacy to Salvation; teaching expressly, that "neither circumcision "nor uncircumcision" would now "avail any "thing" towards acceptance with God; and that they who laid any such stress upon them, "made the Gospel of none effect[f]." Thus were these concessions carefully guarded against misapprehension, or reasonable ground of offence.

The discourses and writings of the Apostle evince a similar kind of caution, and of discrimination, in adapting his reasonings to the different conceptions of those to whom they were addressed.

Immediately after his conversion, "he "preached Christ in the synagogues, that he

[e] Acts xviii. 18. and xxi. 23—26. [f] Gal. v. 2—6.

"is the SON OF GOD;" and he "confounded "the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving "that this is THE VERY CHRIST[g]." No mention is made of any preparatory instruction, to enable them to apprehend this truth; the preacher having to contend with those who already expected the Christ, and to whom even the appellation of the SON OF GOD was by no means strange or unusual, as applied to the Messiah. Probably, therefore, his mode of proving this position was similar to that by which our Lord convinced those whom he first called to be his disciples, that they had "found Him, of whom Moses in "the Law, and the Prophets, did write[h];"—a proof, derived wholly from those sacred writings which every Jew professed to believe.

Again; at Antioch, the purport of his discourse in the synagogue was to shew, "that "the promise which was made to the Fa-"thers,"—to the Prophets and the Patriarchs, —"God had fulfilled the same to them, their "children[i];" proofs, which could be drawn only from the books of the Old Testament.

At Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews, "Paul, as his manner was," says St. Luke, "went in unto them, and three sabbath-days reasoned with them *out of the*

[g] Acts ix. 20—22. [h] John i. 45. [i] Acts xiii. 32, 33.

"*Scriptures*[k]." At Berea, it appears that he did the same; and it is mentioned to the credit of the Bereans, that "they received "the word with readiness, and searched the "Scriptures daily whether these things were "so[l]."

The very same mode of reasoning occurs also in his addresses to Ananias, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, before each of whom he was specially accused of doing many things contrary to the law of Moses[m]; and again, in the last account of him, when he arrived prisoner at Rome; where, to his brethren of Judæa, he expounded and testified "the kingdom of "God, persuading them concerning Jesus, "both out of the Law of Moses, and out of "the Prophets, from morning till evening[n]."

Now, it is evident that such reasoning as this would have been altogether misplaced in preaching to the Gentiles. To impress *them* with any reverence for the Jewish Scriptures, an entirely different process would be necessary; and to give them any adequate conceptions of the nature and design of Christianity, or of its Divine pretensions, not only much preparatory instruction would be requisite, but an almost total change in their religious

[k] Acts xvii. 2.
[l] Acts xvii. 11.
[m] Acts xxiv. xxv. xxvi.
[n] Acts xxviii. 23.

views and sentiments. How, then, did St. Paul conduct himself in this most arduous part of his office?

When the ignorant multitude at Lystra, astonished at the miracle wrought by Paul and Barnabas, would have done sacrifice to them as gods, what arguments do the Apostles use to dissuade them from such wretched impieties? They exhort them to "turn from "these vanities to the living God, which made "heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things "that are therein," and who had never "left "himself without witness, in that he did good, "and gave them rain from heaven, and fruit-"ful seasons, filling their hearts with food "and gladness[o]." These were proofs, from the works of Creation and Providence, level even with the grossest understandings, when set before them in their true and proper light.

When, again, at Athens, he found himself surrounded by a more enlightened audience, the learned frequenters of the Areopagus, and the teachers of philosophy and morals, he opened his commission in a similar way;—"declaring" that "UNKNOWN GOD," whom they ignorantly "worshipped;" setting forth His power as Creator, His spiritual nature,

[o] Acts xiv. 15—17.

and His providential and moral government of the world; deducing from these, by an obvious and easy inference, the absurdity of that idolatrous worship which even these men of wisdom either embraced or connived at; and then openly asserting that momentous truth which they were wont to ridicule, the Resurrection of the Dead [p].

The same appropriate mode of instruction, with respect to Jews and Gentiles, is still more strikingly exemplified in the Apostle's numerous writings.

Of these, the Epistles to the Romans, the

[p] Acts xvii. 24—31. "God that made the world, and all "things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, "dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is wor-"shipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, "seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things: "and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to "dwell on all the face of the earth; that they should seek "the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find "Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in "Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain "also of your own poets have said, For we are also his "offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of "God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like "unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's "device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; "but now commandeth all men every where to repent: be-"cause He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge "the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath "ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, "in that He hath raised him from the dead."

Galatians, and the Hebrews, afford the most perfect specimens of his course of argument with the Jewish unbelievers and Judaizing Christians.

The great question discussed in the two former of these Epistles, is that which relates to the connection between the Law and the Gospel;—how far they were, either or both of them, necessary to salvation, and compatible with each other. Two opposite parties felt an interest in this question;—the Jews, who held that none could be saved but by the law of Moses;—the Heathen, who believed the light of nature to be sufficient, without either Moses or Christ. Although the argument, therefore, appears principally to concern the Jews, yet St. Paul, in writing to those who lived among the Heathen, found it necessary to adapt his reasoning to both. He shews, that "all had sinned," both Jews and Gentiles; and that neither could the latter be justified by the law of nature, nor the former by the law of Moses. On this ground, he establishes the necessity of redemption, of justification, and of sanctification, through some other means; and then brings forward the proofs, that these had been accomplished by Jesus, "the Author "and Finisher of our faith." His argument

is conducted sometimes with reference to the proud pretensions of Heathen philosophy, or the gross delusions of Heathen superstition; sometimes, with considerations more directly adapted to the Jewish worshipper.

The Epistle to the Hebrews being addressed to Jews only, (and probably to those of Jerusalem, the most strict in their observance of the ritual law,) is framed entirely with a view to *their* edification. It enters largely into the design and purport of the Jewish dispensation. Reverencing this dispensation itself, as of Divine authority; and presuming the persons whom he addresses to be well instructed in its nature and importance, and particularly in the design of those Sacrifices, of which its ritual chiefly consisted; the Apostle labours to remove the main objection which the Jews entertained against Christianity, that it seemed to overthrow the former revelations which they had received from God. He shews, from the very nature of its rites and services, as well as from the testimony of their own Prophets, that these derived all their value and their efficacy from their reference to Him whom they prefigured; that in this consisted their greatest worth and dignity; and that therefore, far from depreciating Judaism, Christianity did, in effect,

raise it to its highest degree of elevation. In one word, "the Law was their Schoolmaster, to "bring them to Christ[q]." This was its office; this was its perfection; and having done this, its main purpose was fulfilled; so that no Jew, who rightly understood the nature and spirit of his own religion, could consistently reject the Gospel, which entirely harmonized with the Law, and supplied all its defects and imperfections. Thus he reasons with them on their own principles, and not merely on the personal authority he might claim as an inspired Teacher. He preaches not to them a new religion, but confirms the old.

As instances of the Apostle's mode of reasoning with the *Gentiles* only, we may select his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and the first to the Thessalonians.

Corinth was the head-quarters of voluptuousness, vice, and false philosophy. In opposition to these, and especially to the last, St. Paul descants upon the insufficiency of human knowledge as a guide to spiritual truth. He contends, that "the world by "wisdom knew not God;" and that what the Heathen philosophers deemed weakness and foolishness in those who preached the Gospel, had proved to be wiser and stronger

[q] Gal. iii. 24.

than their efforts to overthrow it, being supported by the signal power of God[r]. This is the substance of the earlier part of the Epistle. Towards the latter part, his mode of illustrating the doctrine of a Resurrection of the Dead affords another instance of this appropriate mode of teaching. The objections to the doctrine are refuted, partly by physical, partly by moral evidence, as well as by insisting upon the established fact of our Lord's Resurrection[s]. To the Jews, there was no need of urging such considerations as these; since all, except the Sadducees, admitted the truth of the doctrine; and the Sadducees our Lord himself had silenced, not by philosophical proofs, but by an appeal to the Books of Moses, which they professed to believe[t].

In his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, St. Paul had to treat with persons nearly of the same cast; gross Heathen idolaters, or refined philosophical unbelievers. With these he contends, chiefly from the miracles wrought in confirmation of the Gospel[u]; from the blameless characters of its teachers, and their sufferings in its cause[x]; from the purity of its precepts, and its beneficial tendency to

[r] 1 Cor. i. 18—28. [s] 1 Cor. xv. [t] Luke xx. 37.
[u] 1 Thess. i. 5. [x] 1 Thess. ii. 1—12.

mankind[y]; from the evidence of our Lord's Resurrection, and the certainty thence arising of a judgment to come[z]. On all these points the contrast is striking between the pretensions of Christianity and those of Paganism. Every one of them admitted also of direct proof, as facts palpable to the senses and observation of mankind, and might easily be substantiated or disproved by those to whom they were addressed.

It is also worthy of remark, that in St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy and Titus, similar instructions are given respecting the lessons to be inculcated upon the unconverted, and upon new converts. We may discern, throughout, the same sobriety and sound discretion, the same primary attention to those fundamental principles of probity and virtue which lie at the root of all vital religion, the same desire that Christians should be "a peculiar "people, zealous of good works[a]," the same solicitude to establish the necessity of "a "pure heart and a good conscience[b]," as the groundwork of a saving Faith.

The rule, then, which the Apostle laid down for his own observance, in the words of the text, was strongly exemplified in every

[y] 1 Thess. iv. 1—12.
[z] 1 Thess. iv. 13—18.
[a] Titus ii. 14.
[b] 1 Tim. i. 5.

part of his conduct. In addressing the *Jews*, he invariably assumes the first principles of religion in general, and even some of the main doctrines of revealed religion, as already known and admitted on their part. In arguing with the *Gentiles*, he begins with laying down the most simple and obvious maxims of moral and religious truth, and from thence leads on his hearers or his readers to the plainest evidences of the Gospel, and gradually to its sublimest mysteries. Nor was this mode of teaching peculiar to St. Paul. It was characteristic of his fellow-labourers in the same cause: it was characteristic of their heavenly Master himself: it was characteristic, moreover, of God's merciful dealings with mankind, in every revelation that has been made to them, from the beginning of time.

Look at the whole course of the Divine dispensations in preparing the world for the coming of HIM who was "THE DESIRE OF "ALL NATIONS[c]."

In the rudest and earliest ages, general intimations only were given of the expected blessing. Gradually more and more light respecting it was diffused, as the mental eye became able to bear it. Matters of Faith

[c] Haggai ii. 7.

were gradually and progressively unfolded. But, in every age, the great practical rules of life were taught fully and clearly *without reserve.* "In every nation," where even a glimpse of revelation appeared, it was understood, that "he that feareth God, and work-"eth righteousness, is accepted of Him[d]." This was laid as the groundwork of the whole. For, until men "believed that there "is a God, and that He is a rewarder of "them that diligently seek Him[e]," it had been in vain to preach any of the more recondite truths which revealed religion could set before them.

Even the Mosaic law, with all its requisitions of faith and worship, was founded on the broad principle of moral and religious obedience. And what were its numerous expiations and ablutions, but means to "con-"vince men of sin," and to shew them the necessity of Atonement and Redemption? What were all the lessons of the Prophets, intermingled with their predictions, but terrific denunciations against sin, and encouraging incitements to virtue? What, too, was the special office of the Baptist, the immediate Forerunner of our Lord, but to "pre-"pare the way of the Lord" by "making his

[d] Acts x. 35. [e] Heb. xi. 6.

"paths straight[f]," and to sound in the ears of his followers the necessity of repentance, and of "bringing forth fruits meet for re-"pentance[g]," that they might be rendered fit for the reception of the Gospel?

True it is, that the Law and the Prophets failed not, together with this high tone of moral instruction, to direct the believer to that Fountain of Grace and Mercy, whence alone he was to derive spiritual aid and comfort: and in highly figurative language the blessings of the Gospel were shadowed out, to win the affections, and to animate the endeavours, of those who would profit by their instructions. In this respect, there is a wonderful harmony between the Law and the Gospel, the Prophets and the Apostles. But there is the same harmony also between them, as "Preachers of righteousness[h]," and expositors of the Divine will. In both, "mercy "and truth are met together, righteousness "and peace have kissed each other[i]." In neither, is God's free grace overlooked on the one hand, or man's free will on the other. Nowhere is unconditional salvation offered; nowhere is Faith separated, as to its saving effects, from the spirit of Obedience, and the

[f] Matt. iii. 3.
[g] Matt. iii. 8.
[h] 2 Pet. ii. 5.
[i] Psalm lxxxv. 10.

endeavour to "perfect holiness in the fear of "God[k]."

Once more; let us look at the pattern of teaching set before us, in HIM who "spake as "never man spake[l]," and "in Whom dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily[m]." How did HE open his instructions to mankind? What was His sermon on the mount, but a preliminary series of exhortations and of precepts, by which His hearers might be qualified to receive, in due time, a fuller revelation of the great purpose of His coming into the world? These were to fit them for entering into His kingdom, or, in other words, for embracing the Christian Faith. In the order of HIS teaching, the inculcating of moral truths preceded the gracious invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that are heavy "laden, and I will give you rest:" and that invitation was immediately followed by the admonition, "Take my *yoke* upon you[n]."

In vain, then, with these authorities before us, may we hope for success in the great work of spreading Evangelical Truth, if we invert this order of proceeding: if we derange and confound that method of instruction, which is no less necessary at one period than at

[k] 2 Cor. vii. 1.
[l] John vii. 46.
[m] Col. ii. 9.
[n] Matt. xi. 28, 29.

another, because at all times in unison with human nature.

Let it not, however, be surmised, that the Apostle, whose maxim in the text I have endeavoured to illustrate, and who shewed himself thus discreet and temperate, in adapting his instructions and his conduct to the weaknesses and prejudices of others, was ever *indifferent* to the truth, or suffered any part of it to be suppressed, concealed, or perverted, for accomplishing his purpose. Nor in him, nor in any other of the sacred writers or preachers, do we find any thing that may give countenance to what has been (by a strange solecism) called *pious frauds*, nor any attempt to win men by the arts of dissimulation.

The contrast between these teachers and many who, in later ages, have gone forth as Missionaries, is too remarkable to escape our notice. Compare them with the Jesuit Propagandists of the Romish Church. Compare them with others also, who have sacrificed purity of doctrine or worship for the sake of swelling the list of their proselytes. Ecclesiastical history furnishes instances of this kind, which the faithful Christian shudders to contemplate. But St. Paul "shunned not "to declare the whole counsel of God[o]."

[o] Acts xx. 27.

"Woe unto me," says he, "if I preach not "the Gospel[p]:" nor in any matter essential to sound doctrine or practice, would he, to the "false brethren" who molested him, "give "place by subjection, no, not for an hour[q]."

If I have succeeded in the main object of this discourse, that of illustrating the character of a faithful Missionary by a review of the apostolical practice in this respect, and with special reference to the rule laid down by St. Paul in the words of the text, it will not be difficult to apply what has been said to the occasion on which we are now assembled.

So intermingled is evil with good in every earthly pursuit; so interwoven are perils and perplexities with every enterprise that has the public benefit for its object;—and, moreover, so prone is the ardour of enthusiasm, or the confidence of self-conceit, to overlook these difficulties, or rashly to encounter them; that, in proportion as any great design appears to be laudable and excellent, is caution necessary as to the means and mode of carrying it into effect.

Hence, when, as in the present day, the universal circulation of the *Scriptures* is made a primary object of concern, the more requi-

p 1 Cor. ix. 16. q Gal. ii. 4, 5.

site is it to take heed that the most precious of all gifts be not perverted by erroneous interpretation of its contents. When, again, extraordinary efforts are making to extend the benefits of an improved method of *Education* to all ranks and degrees of men, increased solicitude is excited, to give that education so unexceptionable a character, as may render it really a source of truth, of rectitude, of utility, of happiness, to those who are to imbibe from it their only mental nutriment and support. And when the work of enlightening the dark regions of the globe, by sending forth *Preachers of the Gospel*, is more actively than ever prosecuted, does it not become us to look with a jealous and scrutinizing eye to those who are to be appointed to so arduous an undertaking, and to the measures by which the pious labour is to be carried on?

There can be little doubt, that one cause of the frequent failure of Missionaries, in their labours to convert Pagans to the Christian Faith, is the injudicious manner in which they obtrude upon ignorant and debased minds, *without any previous moral cultivation*, those doctrines of revealed religion which are most difficult of reception, and most repugnant to their preconceived opinions. To preach, for

instance, Justification by Faith, and Sanctification by the Holy Spirit, before they have been taught that perfect law of God, by a comparison with which their own conduct would render them self-condemned, and shew them the necessity of redemption and renovation,—is to proceed in a manner unnatural, irrational, and therefore the least likely to produce lasting effect. To descant also upon the danger of self-righteousness, and the utter worthlessness of good works, seems not to be the most efficacious mode of bringing those who are already "dead in trespasses and sins[r]," to a better sense of duty, or to excite in them earnest endeavours to "work out their salva-" tion with fear and trembling[s]."

Supposing these doctrines, therefore, to be ever so capable of an unexceptionable explanation, and even to be essential to the Gospel system; yet what discerning man would *begin* the work of conversion by preaching them to persons as yet ignorant of the difference between good and evil; to persons, who know not God, or have no just conceptions of His nature and perfections; who are unconscious that they are transgressors of the law, or have incurred its penalties?

Another error of over-zealous, though well-

[r] Ephes. ii. 1. [s] Phil. ii. 12.

meaning enthusiasts, is that of relying upon the expectation of *extraordinary inspirations from God*, to further their undertaking, and to supply the place of mental cultivation and discipline. Far be it from us to depreciate the piety or sincerity of those who, devoting themselves to the service of God with all their hearts, and souls, and minds, go forth under a strong impression that the Divine blessing cannot but accompany their exertions. Yet, though we may admire and reverence the fervour, the courage, the exalted piety, which appear to prompt them to this noble enterprise, we must warn them, that it is a hazardous, if not a presumptuous measure, to tempt the Most High by rash adventures to execute such a purpose, where the qualifications most essential to it are wanting. When the power of *miracles* was withdrawn, with it was withdrawn also that of *extraordinary inspiration*, itself a miracle. No evidence, at least, can now be given of the one, where the other is not to be found. Yet, even in recent times, unwarrantable pretensions have too often been made to gifts and outpourings of the Spirit upon every emergency, and to marvellous effects wrought upon their hearers by these supposed aids from above. But what, for the most part,

have been the results? For one sincere and steady convert to the Faith, thousands probably scoff at the doctrine, no less than at the preacher. They perceive nothing to command their belief, or their respect, because their understandings are unconvinced, their hearts untouched, their sense of rectitude or of guilt unimproved: or if an impression be made on more susceptible minds, yet is it transient and unsubstantial, "as a morning "cloud, and as the early dew that goeth "away[t]."

The venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has carefully avoided these errors, and endeavoured to follow that sobriety, discretion, and moderation, by which the labours of the Apostles were so eminently distinguished. In the present juncture, a wider field than ever opens to its view, from the enlarged boundaries of the British empire, and from the increased means recently afforded to it by the munificence of the public, though even yet far from adequate to the increased exigencies which demand them. Labourers are still wanted for the harvest. Labourers ever have been wanted, and, perhaps, ever will be wanted, until the period arrives when "the earth shall be filled with

[t] Hosea vi. 4.

"the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters "cover the sea[u]." The incitement, therefore, is great, to send forth every supply that can be obtained, in the hope that by numbers, at least, some effective aid may be administered.

But zeal, however pure and laudable, must be content to submit to the dictates of sound wisdom and discretion, lest her own object be frustrated, her own interests betrayed. Better is a smaller portion of labour well expended, than the toil of a multiplicity of busy agents, without due knowledge and consideration. The shew of good may be greater in the one case than in the other, but the substance will be far less.

It is, I know, a prevalent opinion, that conversions, of whatever kind, to the Christian Faith, are of paramount importance to any lesser discriminations of that Faith among those by whom it is professed; and that provided the Gospel be preached to the Heathen, we need not be scrupulous as to the particular tenets of the parties so employed. And were it a question, whether the Heathen should remain in utter darkness, or receive but a partial and imperfect light, Christian philanthropy would not, perhaps, allow us to

[u] Habakkuk ii. 14.

hesitate on the alternative. But where the question is, whether the work of conversion shall be confided to competent or incompetent distributors of the word;—where we have the choice presented to us, of carrying on a design of such unspeakable magnitude, by the operation of persons trained according to our own well-grounded persuasions of truth, or of committing it to others in whom we can place no such confidence;—then the case is altered; and we can no more, with a safe conscience, consent to blend together these discordant materials in the work of foreign instruction, than in that of domestic culture.

Unquestionably, the most defective or corrupt form of Christianity may be preferable to absolute Infidelity;—Popery, or Socinianism, to Judaism;—Judaism to Mahometanism;—Mahometanism itself to Paganism. Popery recognises most, if not all, the essentials of Scripture Truth. Socinianism does not openly disavow the authority of the Sacred Volume. Judaism receives the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Mahometanism derives some of its tenets from both the Old and New Testaments. Paganism has nothing in common with any of these, except some imperfect recognition of those first principles

of theology and morals, the belief of God and of a future state, which never, perhaps, have been entirely obliterated from the human mind.

We may, then, and we ought to rejoice, when we hear that whole regions which knew not the Lord, or his Christ, have been brought to acknowledge both, whether more or less accurately instructed. When we read, in the records of past times, what was effected in this way by the Jesuits; or, in more recent times, by Protestant Sects, who hold not communion with ourselves; it were a cold and selfish feeling, that should withhold our commendation of their laudable exertions. But we cannot forbear asking ourselves, if *we* had been engaged in the work, should we have done it in the same manner? or could we conscientiously have cooperated with them in the views they inculcated of religious truth? Could we, on the one hand, have joined in recommending image-worship, transubstantiation, invocation of saints and angels? Could we, on the other hand, have concurred in suppressing the doctrines of atonement and sanctification? or, again, with another party, in preaching these doctrines to the neglect of good works? Nay, more, if we were now to traverse these countries where the Gos-

pel had been thus imperfectly, and, in our judgment, erroneously preached, should we not, ought we not to endeavour to put them in possession of a purer and more perfect Faith?

Apply, then, this obvious principle to any design for evangelizing the Heathen world, and it will shew the true line and limits of our duty in this respect. We cannot call in coadjutors whose views of Christianity essentially differ from our own. Willing, to the utmost, to tolerate diversities, nay, errors, of religious opinion, we cannot join hand in hand to give them currency and effect. We must be content with lesser means of compassing our end, rather than avail ourselves of such questionable aid.

On these grounds, it is impossible that we should not be anxious to give to the enterprising spirit now prevalent among us a salutary bias and direction. Not that the Church of England entertains any narrow views of policy, or any feelings of hostility towards those who dissent from her communion; but that, in upholding her own ascendancy, (that ascendancy which the laws and constitutions of the realm have given her,) she is firmly persuaded that the general good will be best promoted; the good even of those who think

scorn of her pretensions, and would fain lay her honours in the dust.

It is a satisfaction above all price to the members of our own Church, that, through the medium of this venerable Society, an object so important may be pursued without compromising any of these essential principles. And though its labours, for more than a century past, have not been of that specious and dazzling description which attracts the notice of the multitude, and becomes the theme of popular admiration; yet is there reason to believe, that the good effected by it has been extensive, solid, and permanent. The Divine blessing appears to have thus far accompanied its endeavours: and why should we doubt the continuance of that blessing, now that our endeavours are to be exerted on a larger scale, if we still conduct them on the same correct views and principles; if, while we strive to emulate the zeal, the ardour, the energy of St. Paul and his fellow-labourers in the ministry, who "stood in jeopardy every hour[x]," and shrunk not from any difficulties which threatened to obstruct their progress;—we yet pursue our course, as they did, with prudence and circumspection,

[x] 1 Cor. xv. 30.

with modesty and humility, with conciliation and forbearance, with equanimity and patient perseverance.

Encouragement, too, of more than ordinary weight, is now presented to us. The Episcopal Church is taking root, we trust, in India. From the excellent Prelate, who, under Providence, directs its course, every thing may be hoped for, that unwearied zeal, united with consummate knowledge, ability, and judgment, can accomplish. Nor may we omit to observe, that the influence of such an exemplary character upon the habits, the morals, and the principles of our fellow-countrymen there resident, can hardly fail to produce a perceptible improvement in their general conduct, and, consequently, to give them an increased respectability in the estimation of the natives, whom we are desirous of reconciling to the Christian persuasion. This is no mean advantage; nay, we should rather say, that it is the greatest of all advantages towards the attainment of our benevolent purpose. For if (as we well know from experience) the influence of example will take effect upon thousands, who will turn a deaf ear to precept and admonition; what may not be anticipated, when they who *profess* "the doc-" trine of God our Saviour," are careful also

to "*adorn*[y]" it by their conversation and demeanour?

Still more, however, will the ability of this Society to promote its main object be increased, when the design of establishing a College, in the metropolis of India, for the education of Missionaries, shall have been carried into effect. From that period, whenever it shall arrive, we may date new hopes of the most animating kind. Trained and nurtured by persons of approved principles, and of competent knowledge and acquirements, *native* Missionaries may hereafter be sent through that vast territory; whose labours among their fellow-countrymen cannot but be greatly facilitated, and their ardour invigorated, by those local and personal attachments, which must operate as a double stimulus to their exertions, and excite a double interest in their success. To calculate the sum of the benefits which may hence be reasonably expected, were, at present, premature. But surely we may trust in the favour both of God and man, on an undertaking so eminently characteristic of pure Christian zeal and Christian benevolence. And when this part of the design is more generally known and understood by the public, than at present

[y] Titus ii. 10.

it appears to be, I feel persuaded, that the munificence of the great and opulent among us, and especially of the many distinguished commercial and mercantile inhabitants of this metropolis, will be cheerfully and amply bestowed for its encouragement and support. It is necessary, indeed, that all who are disposed to promote its object, should be apprised that the revenues of the Society are, as yet, by no means equal to the extent of the demands upon its bounty; demands daily increasing, as additional modes are suggested of doing good.

One observation more (lengthened as this discourse already is) I cannot prevail upon myself to omit, respecting the security afforded by the regulations of this Society, that its object shall be pursued by none but the most unexceptionable means.

Not only are the personal good character and competent ability of the Missionary made indispensable conditions of his admission to the office, and of his continuance in it, but specific rules are prescribed to him for the discharge of his office, entirely in unison with that Apostolical mode of instructing the ignorant and unconverted which has already been considered. I advert particularly to its excellent summary of "*Directions for Cate-*

"*chists for instructing Indians, Negroes, and* "*others;*" which shew how carefully this matter had been weighed, and with what sound judgment the whole process of spiritual teaching had been systematically digested, at the first formation of the Institution. The Missionary becomes responsible for endeavouring to acquit himself of his charge conformably with these directions: and when these and other advantages, resulting from a Society so constituted and so conducted, are duly considered, we shall hardly be charged with speaking "foolishly in the confidence of boasting[z]," if we affirm, that, perhaps, in no other Institution of the kind are to be found securities equally binding and equally effectual.

It is unnecessary to detain you longer, either by a recapitulation of what has been said, or by exhortations which, before such an audience, could add little of weight or interest.

The zeal of the Church of England, by which this Society has ever been actuated, is not that of Mahomet, or of the frantic opponents of Mahomet, the Crusaders, a zeal of violence and blood;—it is not the zeal of the wily Papist, who blends Paganism and Christianity in one discordant mass, rendering truth

[z] 2 Cor. xi. 17.

subservient to falsehood;—nor is it the zeal of the restless Fanatic, who "compasses sea "and land to make proselytes," regardless of the means or qualifications by which to effect his purpose;—but it is a zeal, rational, soberminded, founded on that "Wisdom from "above," which "is first pure, then peaceable, "gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy "and good fruits, without partiality, and with-"out hypocrisy[a]." By this let our conduct still be guided, and the adversary will in vain assail us. God's "faithfulness and truth will "be our shield and buckler[b]:" and the Prophet's encouraging assurance to his people of old, may, without presumption, be extended to every Church so conducting itself:—"No "weapon that is formed against thee shall "prosper; and every tongue that shall rise "against thee in judgment thou shalt con-"demn[c]."

[a] James iii. 17. [b] Psalm xci. 4. [c] Isa. liv. 17.

SERMON V.[a]

MATTHEW V. 13, 14.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? . . . Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

AMONG the extraordinary features which characterize our Lord's Sermon upon the Mount, none, perhaps, is more remarkable than the terms in which He speaks of the influence that His religion was destined to have upon the interests of all mankind. Although the several qualities on which He had pronounced a blessing, and which He had inculcated as the distinguishing marks of His disciples, were such as seemed least likely to attract general admiration or notice, He distinctly states, that, by adopting them into their own conduct, they were to become instruments of purifying and enlightening the

[a] Preached in St. Nicholas Church, Newcastle, Sept. 3, 1829, for The Sons of the Clergy in the Diocese of Durham.

rest of the world. He addresses His followers as persons going forth, under His auspices, to impart knowledge, to work reformation, to preserve and perpetuate truth, virtue, and happiness, to the whole human race. He intimates that, through *their* means, the corruption and ignorance, the blindness and depravity, then universally prevalent, should eventually be dispersed; yielding to a more perfect apprehension of the real good of man. —"Ye are the *salt* of the earth," to preserve it from error and corruption:—"Ye are the "*light* of the world," to shew it the way of righteousness and truth.—No images could more vividly represent the effect to be produced by the religion He then began to promulgate, or the duties thence resulting, to those by whom its profession should be embraced.

With this high and elevated tone of authority nothing that ever fell from mere mortal lips can worthily be compared. And when we consider to *whom* these exhortations were addressed, they become so much the more a subject of wonder and astonishment. To the people of Judæa, to a mixed multitude in no way distinguished from the most ordinary description of hearers;—to citizens, moreover, of a state in subjection to a foreign

power, with no visible means of exercising influence beyond their own circumscribed territory; nor even there, in opposition to the ruling authorities;—how marvellous must have seemed the invitation to adopt this new system, not for their own sake alone, but expressly with a view to the conversion and improvement of the world at large! Yet this in reality appears to be the purpose manifested throughout this memorable discourse, delivered on the very first opening of our Lord's commission. To this point tend those expositions of the Jewish moral law, which, far from annulling any one of its precepts, gave them (under a sanction not inferior to that of the law itself) such enlargement and extent as should adapt them to *universal* observance; applying them, moreover, to the inward affections and dispositions of the heart, no less than to the external conduct. To the same end are those injunctions which appear more immediately to originate with this heavenly Teacher himself; the warnings against hypocrisy and dissimulation, the exhortations to heavenly-mindedness, to simplicity and singleness of heart, to steadfastness of purpose, and unshaken adherence to the truth. All these essentially discriminate the views of our Lord from those of mere human legis-

lators; and prove the real scope and object of His discourse to have extended far beyond the circle to whom it was then addressed; to have been designed for after-ages and far distant countries, even for "as many as," in due course of time, "the Lord our God should "call" to the profession of the faith. So true was it in this, as in every other instance, that he "*spake as never man spake;*" with an authority which none but the Son of God could have assumed, without incurring the charge of arrogance and presumption.

It is a strong confirmation of our Lord's just pretensions to this exalted character, that these intimations, on His part, of the *effect* of His religion, have been most amply verified. The actual result of the dissemination of the Gospel throughout the civilized world attests, by evidence almost irresistible, the inspired foreknowledge, or, rather, the knowledge divinely inherent in Him, who was nevertheless "meek and lowly," "despised and re-"jected of men;"—in Him, who, issuing forth from the obscure dwelling of humble parents, and the solitary recesses of the wilderness, commenced the functions of His high office with indications of majesty and power, only equalled by the mildness of His bearing, by the simplicity of His instructions, by the

benignity of His whole demeanour. Well might the hearers exclaim, that "*He taught* "*as one having authority, and not as the* "*Scribes;*"—well might they "*wonder at the* "*gracious words that proceeded out of His* "*mouth!*" And well may *we* meditate on the still greater weight of evidence since vouchsafed to us, in the completion of that dispensation of "grace and truth," which proved Him to be indeed "a light to lighten "the Gentiles," as well as "the glory of His "people Israel."

With this impression upon our minds, it will hardly be deemed unsuitable to the present occasion, if I urge the remarkable representation here given by our Lord of the part to be sustained throughout the world by His faithful disciples, not only as proving their general obligation, at all times and under all circumstances, to uphold His religion "in "spirit and in truth;" but also as indicating the special duties more immediately incumbent upon ourselves, the Clergy and Laity of our own Communion, with reference to existing circumstances, and to the actual state of the Christian Church.

Historians of that Church, and commentators on its truths, must have investigated these subjects to little purpose, if they have

failed to convince all who are not unwilling to be convinced, that to CHRISTIANITY the world at large is more deeply indebted for its most invaluable blessings, than to any other known cause whatsoever. This position may be broadly and unreservedly stated, notwithstanding the incidental evils acknowledged to have arisen from the corruption of Christianity itself, or from its having been too often perverted to purposes wholly adverse to its character and object. When we speak of the beneficial influence of the Gospel, we speak of it as exhibiting the pure and genuine doctrine of its heavenly Founder and His Apostles; not as the folly or wickedness of man may have occasionally presented it to our view. To cursory observers it may, in particular cases, seem difficult to separate these views. But, for the satisfaction of the more discerning and considerate, we may confidently appeal to the evidence of history. Let such an one examine the records of times *antecedent* to Christianity. Let him read and admire—for who can fail to admire?—the collective wisdom of the great masters of Greece and Rome; of men labouring with a strength of intellect, and an unweariedness of research, never surpassed in after-times, and, in some instances, with an integrity of

purpose worthy of imitation even by the most conscientious Christian. Then let him examine the results. Let him see what benefits, in either case, have accrued to the great mass of mankind, what errors and vices have been corrected, what advancement made in social or individual happiness, in consequence of these researches and these labours. To such a comparative investigation of the actual effects of *Pagan* and of *Christian* instruction, we need not hesitate to challenge any dispassionate inquirer.

I do not mean, however, to enter into the *proofs* of this, on the present occasion. But rather assuming it as a point not likely to be questioned by those who now hear me, I proceed to considerations more immediately affecting ourselves in the present day, as members of "that pure and apostolical branch "of the Church of Christ, established in this "kingdom."

If Christianity was designed by its divine Author for the general improvement of mankind in the things most essential to their present and eternal welfare, and to reclaim them from those errors and vices to which they were most fatally prone, what a weight of duty falls upon its professed disciples, and especially upon the ordained dispensers of its

inestimable benefits, to carry this design, as far as human means can avail, into full effect! If Christians are "the *salt* of the earth," to purify the world, what ought to be their own purity of principle and conduct! For if "the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall "it be salted?" If they are "the *light* of the "world," how does it behove them to take heed that the light that is in them "be not "darkness."

In emphatically giving *these* warnings to his followers, our Lord made it their indispensable duty to establish their own faith and practice on immovable foundations. Equally does he impress this upon them, when He says, in the words of the text, "*A city that is* "*set on a hill cannot be hid.*" It was impossible that persons so circumstanced should be unobserved by others. Either for praise or censure, for hatred or good-will, they would become objects of general animadversion, and deeply responsible for the consequences that might ensue.

In these admonitions were concerned, not only the immediate hearers of our Lord, but all, in after-ages, who should come to the knowledge of the truth. Nor are they limited to the ministers and preachers of His Gospel, but comprehend the entire circle of

Christian believers. True it is, that those individuals, to whom He said, "Blessed are "your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for "they hear;" had something more to answer for, than others who enjoyed not the same personal privileges. True likewise it is, that the "ministers and stewards of the mysteries "of God" are more especially bound to apply these warnings to themselves. But let no Christian of the present day, whatever be his station or calling, think that he is unconcerned in this respect. As the discourse of Jesus was chiefly addressed to the whole multitude, and not to His chosen Twelve alone, so must its injunctions be *now* interpreted as extending, in a great degree, even to the lowliest members of the Christian Church; to all whose example can either minister edification, or occasion scandal, to their fellow-members.

Another important inference may be also deduced from these injunctions. When our Lord designates his followers as persons *distinct* from the rest of mankind, He seems not obscurely to intimate,—what was afterwards more explicitly revealed,—the institution of that Church, which, from the close of His ministry to the final consummation of all things, was to testify of HIM; upholding,

entire and undefiled, the doctrine and discipline, the practical union of Faith, Hope, and Charity, essential to the great purpose of His heavenly mission. When He subsequently predicted of that Church, "that the gates of "hell should not prevail against it;"—when He spake of gathering together His people as "one fold under one Shepherd;"—when He enjoined His Apostles to "go and teach all "nations," promising to be "with them always, "even unto the end of the world;"—it became still more evident, not only that a visible body of believers was thus to be constituted in His name, and to be perpetuated under His all-powerful guidance and protection; but also that, through *their* agency and instrumentality, would be accomplished what He had at first predicted of them, that they were to be "the salt of the earth," and "the "light of the world."

Here, then, we may perceive the fallacy of two very opposite notions, entertained by different parties, hardly more at variance with each other than with Christianity itself. Sometimes it is alleged, that religion is merely a creature of the *State*, an invention of *human* policy, for the better government of mankind. Sometimes it is said to be so exclusively an affair between God and a man's own con-

science, that any interference with it, on the part of the State, is iniquitous and oppressive. These opinions, both equally untenable, originate in a palpable misconception of the subject. It is demonstrable, that the Christian religion neither was, nor could have been, an *human* invention. The evidences of its truth, both external and internal, completely negative the supposition. Nevertheless, it is so essentially beneficial, so absolutely necessary to the good of man, that no legislators or governors can be justified in disregarding its pretensions, when those pretensions have once been made known. *True* religion bears the stamp of Divine authority. *False* religions are the inventions of imposture or delusion. The latter no legislators can have a right to enforce. The former no earthly powers can set aside, or even neglect, with impunity. The State, therefore, not only has a right, but is in duty bound to uphold it. The general good, and the good of individuals, require this; and so far from interference in this respect being oppressive or unjust, every body politic is deeply responsible for its discharge of this, the most sacred of all obligations. The contrary supposition seems to set at nought the belief of a Divine interposition in the affairs of states

and kingdoms, and to forget that they are dependent on the will of Him "whose kingdom "ruleth over all." To whom, indeed, can our Lord's admonitions in the text be more applicable, than to those whom the providence of God hath placed in high stations on the earth, to whom the charge of *Rulers* is assigned, and whose special office it is to be "*the ministers of God for good?*" Fearful is the responsibility which every government incurs in this respect. In whatever hands the power may be placed, on the exercise of that power, with reference to this weightiest of all human concerns, may greatly depend the measure of good or evil with which the Divine Providence shall see fit to visit nations in their collective capacity; as well as the individual interests, temporal and eternal, of the millions of whom those nations are composed.

Still we are told, that "Religion, even the "Christian Religion, is a concern of man "with his Maker alone; a subject fitter for "the closet than the senate; a subject, not "for legislative enactments; but to be left "to every man's private consideration, un-"biassed by the favour or disfavour of the "public voice." Indeed! How, then, shall either the legislative or the executive go-

vernment of the country fulfil the injunction of that Religion, "Let your light so shine "before men, that they may see your good "works, and glorify your Father which is in "heaven?" How shall *this* precept be adequately fulfilled, if no public, no authoritative cognizance is to be taken of religious opinions? How can the light "*shine* before "men," how can it "*glorify* our Father which "is in heaven," if no efficient measures be adopted, to diffuse, to preserve, and to perpetuate its influence throughout the social body? The injunction, in its full spirit and signification, seems scarcely more imperative upon individuals in their personal capacity, than it is upon the supreme powers of the State, collectively considered, so far as they are invested with means and capabilities of forwarding the same blessed purpose.

From the time that Christianity became the prevalent religion of the Roman empire, the principle of an *alliance* between it and the temporal powers has been, more or less effectively, acted upon throughout the Christian world. And although grievous mistakes have not unfrequently been made, as to the *mode* of effecting this, yet has the principle itself never, till in comparatively modern times, been made a subject of controversy.

Nations and rulers professing the Christian faith have, almost as with one consent, acted on the persuasion, that *religion* is indispensable to the welfare of the State, that the *Christian* religion is that which can alone be recognised as the *truth*, and that therefore to exhibit and uphold it in its genuine purity and lustre, is a consideration paramount to every other, under a Christian government.

With this train of *facts*, as well as of *reasoning*, presented to our contemplation, none who live under a government so happily constituted as our own, can be at a loss to discern the path which true national policy, as well as a conscientious regard to our personal welfare, directs us to pursue. No member of the State, be his condition what it may, is unconcerned in this matter. No true patriot, no faithful legislator or ruler, can exonerate himself from this responsibility, in the sight of God and his country. It is at the peril of every individual among us that he treats with indifference or neglect, much more with contempt or hostility, the means, with which Providence hath graciously blessed this nation, of preserving the most precious treasure ever bestowed on man.

If this general position be admitted, its application cannot be difficult. If Christianity

have "the promise of the life that now is," as well as of "that which is to come," and be conducive to the best interests, both spiritual and temporal, of mankind; it is clearly incumbent upon the State to give every facility, every encouragement, to its universal acceptance; and to maintain it, moreover, as far as may be, in its genuine *purity*. To the Legislature it belongs to devise the best *means* of doing this, without compulsion on the one hand, or supineness on the other. One obvious purpose, indeed, of every national establishment of religion, or, at least, one obvious consequence likely to ensue, is, that, while it affords a powerful support to religion itself, it also tends to give stability and consistency to men's faith and practice; lessening the multiplicity of discordant opinions, and restraining those contests for ascendancy, those incessant feuds and animosities, which, of all others, are the most difficult to allay, and the most productive of mutual ill-will.

A fixed establishment of religion has also this further advantage, that it enables the public to judge more accurately what that religion is, and on what foundation its claims to acceptance rest. Where religion is exhibited in no definite form, but is left to be

represented in as many different modes and colours as the caprice, or ignorance, or perverseness of unauthorized teachers may devise, its influence cannot but be precarious and uncertain. But where, as in the case of the Church of England, there are Creeds, Confessions, Catechisms, Formularies of every description, for the elucidation and systematic arrangement of Christian truth; nothing essential is unprovided for, nothing is left to the arbitrary constructions or wandering imaginations of individual instructors. A clear and distinct criterion is afforded to every member of the ecclesiastical body, to enable him to judge even of the teacher himself whether his doctrine be warranted by the word of God.

To these favourable circumstances, under Providence, I think we may say, (without incurring the charge of invidious observation,) that we are mainly indebted for whatever there is among us of pure, unadulterated Christianity, or for that high reputation among other nations, which our Church has obtained, ever since the Reformation; with the exception only of one disastrous period, when a licentious and disorganizing spirit, notwithstanding all its pretensions to superior sanctity, did more to make religion a

by-word and reproach, than was ever brought to pass, except by infidelity itself.

My object, in these observations, is to impress upon the minds of the *Clergy*, on the one hand, a due sense of the awful responsibility of their station and office; and upon those of the *Laity*, on the other, the scarcely less sacred obligation that lies upon them, to uphold the religious Establishments of the country, for the public good. It is a narrow, a sordid, and a most inadequate view of the subject, to regard such an Establishment as ours as a concern in which the *Clergy* alone have an interest; as if there were nothing in it to be considered, but the distinctions, emoluments, or privileges, attached to it by virtue of its connection with the State. The Laity do great injustice to themselves, as well as to us, whenever they entertain so unworthy a persuasion. The very foundation of our Establishment, even of its temporalities and secular advantages, is the *public good*. It is designed to confer upon the whole community the inestimable benefits of Christianity. It is intended to ensure to every member of the State a full and equal participation in those benefits. The temporal privileges belonging to it are bestowed, only for the purpose of rendering the attainment of that

object more certain and effectual. They are *incidental* to the Institution itself, not *essential* to it. The Church might still be a Church, without these; but it would be a Church divested of a large portion of its power to communicate general good. Shorn of these advantages, it might, indeed, present to the world an edifying spectacle of suffering integrity, and might preserve from total extinction the lustre of religious truth; but it would be incapacitated, in a great degree, from exercising its functions with that benefit to the community at large, which must ever be the main object of its concern.

Nor is this the whole evil to be apprehended from the depression of the Church. Christianity itself could hardly fail, without some miraculous interposition on its behalf, to droop and diminish. Security would be wanting for "unity of the spirit," for "the "bond of peace," for "righteousness of life." Not only would sound doctrine be put to hazard; but pure morals, social confidence, individual integrity, the best sympathies of our nature, the conjugal, parental, and filial affections, the love of peace, the love of order, "whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever "things are of good report,"—all would, more or less, suffer from depriving the State

of this its firmest hold upon the hearts and minds of men. And even admitting the probability that every man for himself would still retain some reverence for Christianity, and some sincerity in the profession of it, yet would so much discordancy, so much doubt and dissatisfaction, almost inevitably prevail, as to frustrate (as far as human means could frustrate) some of the main purposes for which the Gospel itself was imparted to mankind.

I do not feel myself called upon, on the present occasion, to dilate upon other topics of exhortation or persuasion. The excellent Institution I am now to advocate, is not one unknown, or likely to be misconceived, by any here present. It speaks for itself, as to its character and utility: nor am I willing to suppose any one so insensible to the claims of the necessitous individuals of our Order, as to need any extraordinary excitement to his benevolence, when such an opportunity presents itself of "doing good unto all men, "and specially unto them that are of the "household of faith."

To maintain religion, in its true spirit and feeling, among *all* classes of the community, it is indeed requisite that one common interest should be felt and acknowledged in

its preservation, and that an union of heart and hand, of zeal and exertion, be put forth in upholding it. It is not, therefore a question of bare calculation, whether or not the revenues of the Church are fully adequate to its exigencies without this aid; but it is a question as to that interchange of kindly feeling and good-will, which arises from a lively sense of one common interest in the purpose of the Institution itself;—a feeling of mutual affection and regard between bodies inseparably connected, as to their best and dearest interests, both in this world and in the next.

Upon this enlarged view of the subject, whilst the inequalities of station and opulence among the Clergy themselves undoubtedly impose upon such of them as "abound" in these respects, the strongest obligations to minister to those who "suffer need;" and to be foremost in every work of benevolence for the support of their necessitous fellow-labourers in the Gospel;—it is, nevertheless, our bounden duty to endeavour to awaken the sympathies of our Lay-brethren in their behalf. It is our duty to address them in the affectionate language of the Apostle, "We "beseech you, brethren, to *know* them which "labour among you, and are over you in the

"Lord, and admonish you; and to *esteem* "them very highly in love, for their works' "sake." In this exhortation something more is surely implied than what mere legislative enactments can supply; an attachment springing from personal acquaintance and personal esteem; an union bound together by ties of mutual obligation and reciprocal good-will;—something far beyond mere compulsory service on the one hand, or compulsory contribution on the other.

With respect to the particular Institution we are now assembled to support, I am solicitous to present it to you in this point of view, not because I am apprehensive that it is in any danger of failing or diminishing, were it left to the unassisted efforts of our own body in this diocese;—(among whom, I am persuaded, that, even under the most untoward circumstances, both means and inclination would still be found to carry on its operations with full effect;)—but because it is, above all, desirable, for the welfare of the whole body politic, that the most perfect *intercommunity of interest and of feeling* should prevail between the Laity and the Clergy; between every member of the Church, be his station secular or spiritual. Such an interchange of good offices must ever be, to both

parties, of incalculable value. While *Clerical* charity, on the one hand, is freely and unsparingly extended to the Laity, fostering every benevolent institution for the supply of their exigencies, of whatever description; the charity of the *Laity* will not be restricted to Laymen alone, nor bestowed with a niggard or reluctant hand, when the wants of the Parochial Clergy, or of their widows and orphans, solicit their helping hand. In such cases, it were an error both of the head and heart, to suppose that any *separation* of interests exists. Nor is it *philanthropy* alone that urges to this interchange of duty and affection. It is the imperative demand of *religion* itself. "Let a man," says the Apostle, "so account of *us* as ministers of Christ, and "stewards of the mysteries of God." Let him regard the spiritual Pastors of the flock, as having this especial claim upon his consideration; in its consequences no less important to himself, than to them who are its immediate objects. This is the powerful link that binds together the Laity and the Clergy. Nor can any other sentiment fully compensate the want of that feeling which arises simply from a right estimate of this *pastoral* connection. "See how these Christians love "one another," was observed of the primitive

disciples, even by their relentless enemies. And whence, chiefly, did that love arise, but from *this* powerful bond of union? How earnestly was the same sentiment also inculcated by our Lord himself; with whom no image appears to have been more strongly impressed upon His own mind, than that of *the good Shepherd*, "who knoweth His sheep, "and is known of them; who goeth before "them, and they follow Him; for they know "His voice: but a stranger will they not "follow; for they know not the voice of "strangers." Happy were it for us, if we could hope to see such representations as these more generally realized in the present day. But it is among the most discouraging circumstances with which we have now to contend, that they are daily less and less regarded, and almost vanishing from our view. A sort of *anti-pastoral* spirit, singularly characteristic of modern times, continually undermines our best efforts; nor could the enemies of religion more effectually paralyse our labours, than by thus endeavouring to dislodge us from our strongest hold upon the hearts and affections of the people.

Let it be our care, then, my Reverend Brethren, to rekindle, in our respective charges,

those affections towards us, by whatever means a truly Christian disposition can suggest;—"by patience, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by "love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by "the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand, and on the left; "by honour and dishonour; by evil report "and good report." And let us hope and trust, that the Laity will meet these our endeavours with corresponding feelings of amity and kindness, of docility and sincerity, and with a hearty cooperation in the great work of our ministry. When these sentiments have well taken root, the fruits of the Gospel will assuredly flourish and abound. Truth will be maintained with charity;—charity will be under the guidance of integrity and discretion. Unity and concord, in the truest acceptation of the terms, will be promoted and increased;—not that hollow and deceitful compromise, by which all differences of opinion are merged in a lukewarm indifference to the truth; but that real accordance in sentiment and principle, which alone can give stability and permanence to our mutual professions. Thus will the surest foundation be laid for true national greatness. Whether

in prosperity or adversity, under whatever circumstances of triumph or depression, the arm of Providence, we may still trust, will be stretched forth in our defence, and "God, "even our own God, will give us His bless-"ing."

SERMON VI.[a]

PSALM xxvi. 8.

Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

ONE of the most striking features in the character of the Royal Psalmist, is that genuine spirit of piety which runs through all his writings, and renders him, perhaps, of all the sacred writers, the most perfect model for our instruction in the great duty of devotion. This deep-rooted feeling evidently had its origin in an awful sense of the Divine Majesty on the one hand, and a grateful acknowledgment of Divine mercies on the other. Hence, whatever be the occasion that calls forth his holy effusions, whether it be faith or repentance, joy or sorrow, humiliation or thanksgiving, prayer or praise, the strains are equally appropriate, equally expressive of the profoundest reverence for the attributes of the Almighty, the lowliest conviction of hu-

[a] Preached at The Consecration of St. Paul's Chapel, in the parish of Ryton, Durham, on Tuesday, Sept. 9, 1828.

man infirmity, the liveliest emotions of gratitude for benefits received, the firmest trust and confidence in HIM, "in whom we live, "and move, and have our being."

It is this inexhaustible variety in the exercise of devotion that creates so universal an interest in the book of Psalms. To whatever class of readers it may be presented, in whatever frame of mind it may find those readers, a page can hardly be turned over in which something will not be discovered adapted to the individual who seeks to profit by it. A situation can hardly be imagined, in which it may not be made eminently productive of encouragement or consolation, and "profit-"able for reproof, for correction, for instruc-"tion in righteousness."

It is further characteristic of these highly spiritual compositions, that as they never droop or become languid from *want* of fervour and animation, so do they never, from *excess* of those qualities, give license either to superstition or fanaticism. Compared with many of the most admired performances of mere human genius, they are in these respects far above all competition. The most abstracted reasoner on the Divine perfections will find himself utterly unable to give equally clear, perspicuous, and intelligible

representations of the Supreme Being, with those which are here set before him; while the extravagancies of the devotee and the enthusiast will be put to shame, when placed in contrast with the pure, and chaste, and simple, and rational character, which marks even the most ardent and enraptured of these elevated strains.

But it is not my present purpose to enter farther into so wide a field of contemplation as this general view of the subject would afford. The words of the text admonish me to confine my observations to one part only of this extensive range, and one most befitting the special occasion on which we are now assembled. "Lord, I have loved thy "habitation, and the place where thine ho-"nour dwelleth."

These expressions are so simple, as to require no explanation; and the sense is so obvious, that none can easily fail of apprehending it. Whatever may have been the occasion on which they were uttered, they seem almost incapable of being either misapplied or misunderstood. They express those primary and best feelings of our nature, which, when unsophisticated and unperverted, create in us a *delight* in *acts* of public worship, and *reverence* for the *places*

in which that worship is performed. That the joy which the Psalmist experienced in frequenting the House of God, was not a light or transient pleasure, but a permanent and reverential feeling, grounded on firm principles of duty as well as of affection, his writings abundantly manifest. That it was also not a vague and indefinite notion of the Divine Presence which he cherished, such as those affect who conceive that no distinctions of time or place need be observed in acts of public worship, is no less evident. "*Lord, I* "*have loved the habitation of thy house, and the* "*place where thine honour dwelleth.*" These are distinct and measured terms, clearly implying that the *place* in which the inspired monarch delighted to pour forth his soul in prayer, was that which, being hallowed for that special purpose, not only possessed a superior sanctity in the estimation of the worshipper, but rendered the service performed in it more especially acceptable to the Almighty himself. It was emphatically called the *habitation* of God, the place where His honour *dwelleth*. True, indeed, it is, that the Omnipotent, whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, "dwelleth not in "temples made with hands;" nor is circumscribed within any limits that man can assign

to Him. Nevertheless, for the purpose of receiving the homage of his creatures in a manner more adapted to their infirmities, and more calculated to excite in them the thoughts and the feelings befitting such occasions, He vouchsafes to assure them of His more immediate though invisible presence, where they are thus assembled to give the honour due unto His Name. Hence, the warmth of feeling with which the Psalmist makes mention of the House of God. "O "send out thy light and thy truth, that they "may lead me; and bring me unto thy holy "hill, and to thy dwelling; and that I may "go unto the altar of God, even unto the "God of my joy and gladness."—"We wait "for thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst "of thy temple."—"Blessed is the man whom "thou choosest, and receivest unto thee: he "shall dwell in thy court, and shall be satis-"fied with the pleasures of thy house, even "of thy holy temple."—"O how amiable are "thy dwellings, thou Lord of Hosts! my soul "hath a desire and longing to enter into the "courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh "rejoice in the living God."—"Glory and "worship are before Him; power and honour "are in His sanctuary."

"*Hallow my sabbaths, and reverence my*

"*sanctuary*," was, indeed, an indispensable precept of the Jewish Law; and, under that Law, "the sweet Psalmist of Israel" had been, from his youth up, tutored and instructed. But the obligation of the precept was anterior even to the Law itself. The *patriarchs* knew and practised it. Their sacrifices were "*brought unto the Lord*," and altars were erected in places appropriated to that service. Traces of this are found both before and after the deluge; in the histories of Abel and Seth, of Noah, of Abraham and of Jacob. The services of the tabernacle, during the journey of the Israelites in the wilderness, and *before* the delivery of the Law from Mount Sinai, shew the sanctity attached to the place of God's immediate presence, as well as the Divine authority on which it was grounded.

And as this sentiment prevailed generally *before* the Law of Moses, so did it continue *after* the Law had ceased. Our Lord fulfilled the precept Himself, and taught others to do the same. He attended the temple-service; He taught in the temple; He preached in the synagogues, where the Jewish Scriptures were read and expounded every sabbath-day. He took every opportunity to maintain the sanctity of the Jewish temple,

and wrought a signal miracle to purify it from the scandalous profanations which had been connived at by the Jews themselves.

When the Apostles, after our Lord's ascension, engaged in the great work of the Christian ministry, to which they were by Him specially ordained, the same regard to stated places and times of worship influenced their conduct. The Jewish service ceased to be binding upon Christian believers, when the entire purpose of the Mosaic ritual was done away, having been fulfilled by Christ himself, and a new and more enlarged dispensation established in its stead. But under that new dispensation effectual care was taken to provide for the exigencies of the Church in this respect. Though driven, at first, by the terrors of persecution, to seek private and obscure retreats, yet it is evident, from the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles, that the regular attendance of the faithful in a place set apart for joint religious duties, was strictly observed. And no sooner did the circumstances of the Church admit of greater publicity and extent, than the erection of sacred edifices became an object of primary concern. No sooner was the Christian religion taken under the protection of the State, than Churches were multiplied on every side;

and no cost was spared in their external and internal decoration. In process of time, this was, indeed, carried to a culpable excess; and in a superstitious veneration for the *externals* of religion, too little regard was paid to that pure spirit of *internal* devotion, which can alone render such services acceptable in the sight of God. The Protestant Reformation removed these scandals, and introduced into Christian worship forms and observances more consonant with Christian simplicity. But though what was superfluous and superstitious was laid aside, the principle of becoming reverence for authorized places of public worship, was, for the most part, strictly adhered to. In our own country especially, the happy medium was preserved between vain ostentation on the one hand, and sordid meanness on the other. With *us*, our Churches still continue to be venerated as the hallowed sanctuaries of God;—hallowed, not merely by being set apart exclusively for such purposes, nor by "vain oblations" of pomp and ceremony, but by the spiritual services performed in them, and the pure offerings of those who worship "in spirit and in "truth."

I have made these few brief observations, chiefly for the purpose of impressing you

with a just respect for such sacred edifices as that which we are now dedicating to the service of God, and with just notions also of the manner in which it will behove you to manifest that respect, in your own conduct and demeanour.

It is a cold and cheerless kind of philosophy, (if philosophy it may be called,) that affects to undervalue the outward forms, and modes, and decencies of religious worship. It argues but little depth of observation, and little knowledge of the human heart, to imagine that the substance of pure religion can long be retained, without the help of appropriate ordinances, and of stated occasions, to awaken slumbering piety, and to call into action the latent energies of devotion. It is no less an error to suppose, that the solitary devotions of individuals in their closets may supersede the joint acts of supplication and thanksgiving in such assemblies as that which now presents itself to our view. Nor is it much less erroneous, to regard as a matter of indifference, WHERE, and by WHOM, the public ministrations of religion shall be performed; whether under the sanction and direction of long-established usage, derived from Scripture, and from the primitive practice of the Apostles and their successors, or

with no other security than the variable opinions of self-appointed teachers, or the continual fluctuations of mere human judgment.

I mean nothing invidious towards those who differ from us in their views of this subject, when I earnestly entreat you, my brethren, as professed members of our Church, duly to appreciate the advantages you enjoy, and duly to apply them to your own spiritual benefit. Consider well, that every place of public worship in communion with the established Church of England is not only a House of God, and a House of Prayer, but is also a school of Christian instruction and edification. With the *Scriptures* continually read to you, with a duly ordained and competently learned *Ministry* to preach and expound them, with a *Liturgy* truly scriptural, rich in doctrine as well as in practical exhortation, assisting you to pray both "with "the spirit, and with the understanding;" having also the *Sacraments*, which are the ordinances of Christ himself, rightly and duly administered for your comfort and support; —who, that has such means of grace within his reach, can be destitute of the light of the Gospel, or debarred of the means of working out his salvation? And is it to be imagined, that He who promised to be with His Church,

"even to the end of the world," will refuse a blessing to its ministrations? Or, where are better assurances to be obtained, if these be insufficient?

Well, then, might we address you in the words of Samuel to the people of Israel, "Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in "truth, with all your heart: for, *consider* "*how great things He hath done for you.*" Consider what it is, thus to have your spiritual wants provided for;—to have your sabbaths and your sanctuaries preserved inviolate; to be permitted, nay, invited and enjoined, to use them for your own individual comfort and improvement; to take freely of the waters of life, flowing from the fountain of heavenly wisdom; to hear the word of exhortation, of warning, of encouragement, from them who "watch for your souls, as "they that must give account" of their ministry; to join in the purest devotions, in every branch of supplication and thanksgiving to the throne of grace; to partake of the laver of regeneration in *Baptism*, of the laying on of hands in the apostolical rite of *Confirmation*, and in the *Eucharist* of the bread of life, and the cup of salvation. Reflect also, that these benefits belong not only to yourselves, but to your children, and your

children's children; and then say, what will be your hope, what your excuse, if these things pass by unheeded, or bring forth no fruit to perfection?

It is highly creditable to the Legislature and the Government of this country, as well as to the many individuals who have associated themselves together for this great work of national piety and benevolence, that of late years so much has been done for the enlargement and increase of our places of public worship. It is also creditable to the general good feeling of the people at large, that these efforts have been so far met by a corresponding disposition to profit by them, that the additional Churches and Chapels are frequented, for the most part, by large and attentive congregations. Such a manifestation of the attachment still subsisting to our venerable Establishment, fully warrants us in the hope that there is less decay of true Christian piety among us than might heretofore have been imagined; and warrants us also in the expectation, that, as these means and opportunities are extended, a proportionate increase will be found among us of those qualities that best become a Christian people.

I would fain hope, that of those who now

hear me there are few, if any, who do not readily concur in these sentiments. I will detain you, therefore, no longer than while I briefly advert to the *conduct* by which such sentiments may be most satisfactorily manifested to others, and most beneficially exercised both for your own and for the public good.

The first and most obvious testimony of your sincerity in this respect, will be your regular attendance here on public worship. To "hallow the Sabbath," and to "reverence "the Sanctuary," are precepts joined together in the word of God; and to pretend to fulfil the one without regarding the other, is mere delusion. For whether is greater, the sanctuary, or the service for which the sanctuary is ordained? How shall the sabbath be hallowed, but by resorting to the sanctuary; or the sanctuary be reverenced, but by devoutly using it at such stated periods as God hath appointed? Professions of religion, unaccompanied with such evidences of their effect, may well be suspected of insincerity or self-deception.

Another testimony of respect for the sanctuary will be the propriety of your demeanour whilst engaged in its solemn duties. "Keep "thy foot," says the wise man, "when thou

"goest to the House of God, and be more "ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of "fools." So far as the directions of our Church can effect this, it is secured by the rubrics of her Liturgy; in which care is taken that, according to the Apostle's injunction, "all things be done decently and "in order." And what can be said in extenuation of levity and unconcern in this holy occupation? Who can suppose that his duty is discharged by a mere personal attendance, or that God will accept the service of the lips while the heart is far from Him? To come for nothing but outward show, or the gratification of an idle curiosity, is to honour neither the sabbath nor the sanctuary. To such persons might be applied the keen sarcasm of the Prophet, "Lo! thou art unto them as "a very lovely song of one that hath a plea-"sant voice, and can play well on an instru-"ment; for they *hear* thy words, but *do* them "*not*."

But these admonitions will have little weight unless there be that "preparation of "the heart," which purifies it from evil inclinations, and creates earnest desires and resolutions to profit by the appointed service. The purpose of our assembling and meeting

together in the House of God, is "to render "thanks for the great benefits we have re- "ceived at His hands, to set forth His most "worthy praise, to hear His most holy word, "and to ask those things which are requisite "and necessary as well for the body as the "soul." This presupposes a deep sense of our own unworthiness, and of His infinite majesty and glory; a desire to humble ourselves before Him as supplicants of His mercy, and to adore His unspeakable goodness, who encourages and enjoins us, for the sake of His beloved Son, to "come boldly to the throne "of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and "find grace to help in the time of need." This preparation of the heart cometh, however, from God Himself, who, by His Holy Spirit, "puts into our minds good desires, and "enables us to bring them to good effect." But when the heart is thus prepared, every part of our Church-service is adapted to strengthen and confirm these sentiments within us. Its forms of confession and penitence, of exhortation and counsel, of supplication and thanksgiving, of faith, and hope, and charity, whilst they forcibly remind us that "we are unable of ourselves to help our- "selves," tend at the same time to "fill us

"with all joy and peace in believing, and to "abound in hope through the power of the "Holy Ghost."

Once more, then, let me exhort you so earnestly to consider these things, that you may be able sincerely to say with the Psalmist, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy "house, and the place where thine honour "dwelleth." In addition also to the considerations already urged, I might, without impropriety, advert to the circumstances which, in *this* parish more especially, should attach you to the service of our Church. I might dwell on the advantages you enjoy in having set over you a faithful, affectionate, and exemplary *pastor*, who may well take to himself the Apostle's affecting declaration, "*I have no* "*greater joy than to hear that my children* "*walk in truth.*" I might press this and other similar topics upon you, as appealing to those feelings to which few can be altogether insensible. But the subject itself is too weighty to be mixed up with any *personal* considerations. Higher motives than any this world affords will urge you to "worship the "Lord in the beauty of holiness," to "praise "Him in the great congregation," to "pay "your vows before them that fear Him," to "enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and

"into His courts with praise;" to "be thank-
"ful unto Him, and speak good of His
"name."

While, therefore, we charitably leave to others full liberty of conscience to worship God according to their own sincere persuasions, however different from our own; be it *our* concern to shew both our sincerity and our thankfulness for the benefits we ourselves enjoy, by a steadfast adherence to the communion in which we have been brought up and nurtured. Let us remember, that though Christian charity "*thinketh no evil*" of others, yet it "*rejoiceth in the truth;*" and, that although we are directed to "*prove all things,*" it is that we may "*hold fast that which is*
"*good.*" And since we humbly trust that we have "chosen that good part that shall not
"be taken away from us," let us beseech HIM, who is "the way, the truth, and the life," to preserve us from all error of faith or practice, and to pour upon us "the continual dew of
"His blessing." So shall our "prayers be set
"forth in His sight as the incense, and the
"lifting up of our hands be as an evening
"sacrifice." They will go up "for a memorial
"before God," and be returned in tenfold benefits upon ourselves, our households, our country, and all that belongs to us, whether

as individuals, or as members of the community at large. Then may we hope to realize the Psalmist's animated description of a prosperous nation, "that our sons may grow up "as the young plants, and our daughters may "be as the polished corners of the temple; "that our garners may be full and plenteous "with all manner of store; that our sheep "may bring forth thousands and ten thou-"sands in our streets; that our oxen may be "strong to labour; that there be no decay, "no leading into captivity, and no complain-"ing in our streets."—"Happy are the people "that are in such a case; yea, blessed are the "people who have the Lord for their God."

SERMON VII.[a]

ISAIAH xxxiii. 6.

Wisdom and Knowledge shall be the stability of thy times.

THE Prophet Isaiah lived in a very eventful period of the Jewish history. In the reign of Ahaz, idolatry, sacrilege, and impiety prevailed to such an extent, as to bring down the judgments of God upon the people, and to threaten the extinction of their national greatness. Under his successor Hezekiah, new dangers arose from a fierce and powerful invader, who, through the intestine commotions of the State, sought to effect its subjugation to a foreign dominion. The Prophet's fellow-countrymen had thus experimentally felt the miseries attendant upon unsettled times, in which no stations, public or private, could ensure to their possessors undisturbed enjoyment.

It was during this critical juncture, that

[a] Preached before the Judges of Assize, in Durham Cathedral, July 27, 1834.

Isaiah was entreated by his Sovereign to aid him with his prayers and counsel, in what he emphatically called "a day of rebuke and "blasphemy." The Prophet returned a message of consolation and encouragement; and, in the words of the text, pointed out the main source whence that encouragement was to be derived. Foretelling the deliverance of the Monarch and his people from the immediately impending danger, he warns them how they might best be assured of future safety and prosperity:—"Wisdom and Know-"ledge shall be the stability of thy times."

Certain auspicious circumstances at that moment tended to strengthen this assurance. Hezekiah's predecessor, among other irreligious acts, had "shut up the doors of the "house of the Lord;" withholding from the people the performance of public worship; compelling them either to the worship of *false* gods, or to the entire neglect of religious service. It was one of the first cares of Hezekiah to remove this national evil. He "opened the doors of the house of "the "Lord," and issued solemn injunctions to the priests and people, to revive the spirit of devotion, which had so long slumbered and slept. To this renovated state of their affairs the Prophet may be supposed to advert, when

he speaks of Wisdom and Knowledge, as constituting the foundation of their national stability.

The words of the text need no further illustration; nor can we fail to perceive that they admit of an application far more general and extensive. There is nothing to limit them to the Jewish nation. Every community, every individual, is interested in the *stability* of the times they live in;—times, not liable to fluctuation and disorder;—times, in which no fearful events occur to disquiet men's minds, or to interrupt them in the ordinary discharge of their duties. So far as their *temporal* interests are concerned, nothing is then wanting to promote mutual confidence and good-will. In their *spiritual* concerns, also, much depends upon the *stability* of the times; and Religion will, in proportion, decay or flourish. Nor does this apply only to the great and wealthy, whose stations more directly expose them to the evils of public commotion; but to every class and every condition of society. All will suffer, during such commotions, in those private relationships, which constitute the chief enjoyment of social life; and often will be verified the Prophet's foreboding—"The poor "shall be oppressed every one by another,

"and every one by his neighbour; the child "shall behave himself proudly against the "ancient, and the base against the honour-"able."

As a preservative against these evils, the Prophet directs our attention to the acquisition of *Wisdom* and *Knowledge;* terms, not here left open to a loose and indefinite acceptation, but defined and interpreted by the sentence immediately following, "THE FEAR "OF THE LORD IS HIS TREASURE." It is that Wisdom, that Knowledge, which has THE FEAR OF THE LORD for its foundation. It is religious Wisdom, religious Knowledge, as distinguished from every other acquirement; such as is implied in the devout aspiration of the Psalmist, "There be many that say, "Who will shew us any GOOD? Lord, lift "THOU up the light of THY countenance "upon us."

In speaking, however, of national prosperity, and its causes, how few appear to regard it as dependent upon *religious* principle! Nay, how many seem to imagine, that the good of the community may best be promoted by leaving the mind, in this respect, altogether unrestrained! Within the memory of most of us, the experiment was actually made, in a neighbouring country, of entirely

separating Religion from the State, and erecting a Government upon the basis of Infidelity. And what was the result? Was it not, to "call evil good, and good evil;" to "put "bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter;" to "put darkness for light, and light for dark-"ness?" Was it not to bring contempt upon *Morals*, no less than upon *Religion;* to shake to their foundation the pillars of civilized society; and to turn the world into an Aceldama, a very field of blood?

By whatever appellations such Wisdom and such Knowledge may be dignified, or by whatever superiority of talents they may be recommended, we are surely warranted in affirming, that they betray profound ignorance of *real good*. Yet willing hearers of these doctrines will never be wanting. Love of novelty, love of popularity, impatience of restraint, predispose men for the acceptance of notions independent of Divine authority, and even repugnant to its plainest declarations; exemplifying the Prophet's bitter reproach, in the name of the Most High, "My "people have committed two evils:—they "have forsaken ME, the fountain of living "waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, "broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

The Wisdom and Knowledge derived from

the Word of God can never thus mislead us. In the Sacred Oracles, the terms *Truth* and *Knowledge* are inseparably connected. The vital principle, indeed, of all *human* knowledge, physical or moral, is *Truth*. But the knowledge flowing from *Divine Revelation* is preeminently entitled to this character, being that which He alone can impart, who is emphatically called The Truth; He whose Revelations are to the *moral* world, what the Sun is to the *natural* creation, the original source of light. Shut out the rays of either from the system it was ordained to influence, and what will be the consequence? "Darkness" will "cover the earth," and "gross darkness the people." The knowledge from above not only dispels this darkness, but has the additional advantage of being infallibly certain, of being also adapted to every capacity, and, like its Divine Author, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Knowledge of this description cannot but contribute to "the stability of the times." "The wisdom from above" claims and exercises a direct control over the unruly wills and affections. Without such control, knowledge will increase, rather than diminish, public evil. Knowledge is, indeed, truly said to be power. It is power of the highest order.

But what is power, misdirected and perverted, but *evil*, positive, tremendous evil?—and *intellectual* power is so much more so, as it is more irresistible than mere *physical* strength. Even the Omnipotence of the SUPREME BEING (with reverence be it spoken) would fill us only with consternation and dismay, did we not know that it can never be exercised but in entire concurrence with Infinite Goodness, Justice, Mercy, and Truth. For the same reason, *that* Knowledge only can be conceived to operate in a beneficial direction, which is regulated by THE FEAR OF GOD, by the dread of HIS displeasure, by the hope of HIS favour. This, while it gives a constant bias to the heart and the affections in favour of that which essentially promotes the happiness of ourselves and others; tends also most effectually to enlighten the understanding, and to rectify the judgment. They who are guided by it "judge not after the sight of their "eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of "their ears," but are "of quick understand-"ing in the fear of the Lord." Their rules of conduct are not grounded on the fluctuating opinions of mankind, but are drawn from the only infallible source of Righteousness and Truth.

The DIVINE BLESSING also, we are assured,

rests upon the Knowledge which is under this direction. Hence its possessor is rendered independent of worldly censure or worldly commendation. A consciousness of rectitude is felt, which is proof against the wiles of sophistry, the shafts of ridicule, the arm of power, the fiery darts of the wicked, however multiplied, however malignant. To the abandonment of this Religious Wisdom may be ascribed, not only the train of evils which individuals suffer from "making ship-"wreck of their faith and conscience;" but those fearful convulsions in states and empires, which occasionally lay waste communities once flourishing and distinguished, leaving them scarcely a name for history to record.

On these obvious considerations rests the main argument for that alliance between Religion and Civil Government, which has been the prominent feature of almost every civilized community upon earth, and in none more so than in our own. An *irreligious* Government, an *irreligious* Legislature, a nation whose rulers and subjects discard from their polity and their jurisprudence a sense of duty to the Most High, as the prime source of every blessing, public and private, social and individual, would be a degrading

anomaly in the history of mankind; more especially so, in the *Christian* world; and were this a fit time and occasion for going into the inquiry, it might not be difficult to shew, that in proportion as Christian principles and Christian conduct have been maintained and acted upon by States and Governments, in their intercourse with each other, have been their character and estimation throughout the world, and consequently their real POLITICAL GREATNESS.

What shall we think, then, of those who, in the midst of the light which "the day-"spring from on high" hath shed around us, are pressing upon our acceptance designs for the improvement of mankind, avowedly disconnected from any reference to the DIVINE WILL; propounding theories which vitally affect the moral, political, and religious interests of the community, on no better authority than that of the individuals who devise them;—magnifying above measure every object of worldly pursuit; whilst the infinitely higher concerns, which connect man with his Maker, and the interests of this life with those of a future state, are regarded as but of secondary importance?

And is there nothing in the aspect of the *present* times, that should warn us of the

danger, the *special* danger, of thus relinquishing the strongest hold upon the hearts and minds of men? Does the Infidel now slumber at his post? Does the Blasphemer abate his malice? Are the most sacred institutions of our country unassailed by calumny and outrage? Are there no symptoms of a deadly venom infused into the Body Politic, which forbid us to be lulled into security? Or is it a time to throw aside the only means afforded us of rendering these bitter waters again pure and innoxious? Unless the still small voice of reason, and the louder and more awful calls of Revelation, be altogether lost in the din of popular clamour; surely never ought the Prophet's admonition to make a deeper impression, than at the present moment, upon all who regard the *stability* of the times as essential to the public good, or to their own personal well-being. Do we, indeed, find stability in any degree promoted, by the experimentalists who set at nought this admonition? Our boasted improvements in intellectual cultivation, whither do they lead? to what restingplace of peace or security? Have they hitherto been attended with any other result, than to unsettle the ancient foundations of our social fabric, to pull down and to destroy, and to build up nothing in their stead? to

spread over the mass of the community so much knowledge as to generate conceit and discontent; but affording no adequate counterpoise to those disorderly and corrupt affections which render knowledge itself instrumental to evil?

Let not these remarks, however, be misconstrued, as tending to discourage mental cultivation, or to circumscribe its limits within any exclusive privileges of rank or station. The error lies not so much in *excess* of Education with respect to *human* knowledge in any class of the community, as in the *defect* of it with respect to its subjection to the DIVINE WILL, and its conformity with the DIVINE COMMANDS. The largest intellectual acquirements, *without religion*, are not merely imperfect and defective, viewed as a system of Education; but they are positively dangerous and mischievous. In every station of life, the greater the attainments, the greater are the means of doing *evil* as well as *good;* and the more numerous are the temptations to misapply those attainments. Whatever may be the errors or obliquities resulting from gross ignorance and entire neglect of instruction; frequent are the instances of scarcely less palpable deviations from truth and rectitude, among those who stand fore-

most in the ranks of literature and science. Against such deviations, the most scanty pittance of scientific or literary acquisitions, accompanied with a deep-rooted sense of religious duty, will be an infinitely better security than all that worldly wit or wisdom can devise, where that is wanting.

None will better know how to appreciate the truth or importance of these observations, than those who, on such occasions as the present, go forth to the periodical administration of the laws of our country throughout the community. None have so frequent opportunities of observing how frail is the tenure of integrity, of upright dealing between man and man, of social and personal ties, of control over the lusts and passions, of every thing that constitutes mutual confidence or mutual security, where the all-pervading principle of RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION is either extinct or dormant. Every catalogue of offences that comes before our criminal courts, every vexatious litigation that calls for judicial decision, tends, more or less, to prove that neither the dread of human laws, nor the influence of character and reputation in society, nor even the strong hold of personal self-interest, will avail to overcome the propensity to evil-doing; unless a still more potent feeling predomi-

nate;—that "FEAR OF THE LORD," by which "men depart from evil," and which is emphatically said to be "the beginning of wis-"dom," the very root and foundation of all that is good and acceptable in the sight both of God and man.

The test, then, is sure and simple, by which we may form our judgment respecting whatsoever is proposed for the public good. When extraordinary advancements in general knowledge are ostentatiously announced, as evidence of the superiority of our own times over those of our less boastful predecessors; we may reasonably ask, what *fruits* have yet appeared to justify these pretensions, or to warrant our future expectations of good? Are the benefits conferred, adequate to the promises and expectations held out? Are those who receive them happier and wiser than heretofore? Are they better "instructed "both to be full and to be hungry, both to "abound and to suffer need?" As their mental powers expand, and their acquirements multiply, do they become sensible, that, even to the most highly cultivated faculties, it is given only, in this present state, to "see "through a glass darkly;" and are they so much more willing to "walk humbly with "their God," and to "bring into captivity

"every thought to the obedience of Christ?" Does the "honour" which they are taught to "seek one of another," better dispose them (or does it not rather indispose them) to "seek the honour that cometh from God "only?" The answer to these questions will best determine what progress has been made in that Wisdom, and that Knowledge, on which alone we are warranted to depend, for the stability of our times.

Nor let it be overlooked, that although Wisdom and Knowledge are here spoken of as *united* and *cooperative* in promoting the public good; they are by no means to be understood as terms of *identical* signification. There may be a superabundance of Knowledge, with much lack of Wisdom; and there may be a sufficiency of Wisdom, with scanty portions of Knowledge. Even the Knowledge supplied by *Revelation* may be perverted and misapplied, where that Wisdom is wanting, or is disregarded, which He alone, of whom it is devoutly sought, "giveth libe-"rally, and upbraideth not." Still more strongly should this distinction be marked, with reference to all human Knowledge. When St. Paul says, that "the Wisdom of "this world is foolishness with God," he intimates that the intellectual attainments, which

men dignify with that appellation, are worthless in the sight of God, unless accompanied with the Wisdom that is from above; and still more so, if set in opposition to that Wisdom. And, again, when he says, "the fool-"ishness of God is wiser than men," it is implied, that the Divine truths of Revelation, which men "wise in their own conceits" dare to treat with contempt or neglect, are as far superior to the most enlarged human discoveries, as the Creator is above the creature, or as Infinity transcends the utmost extent of a finite intellect.

The application of all that has been said, must be left to every individual's honest judgment. The true PATRIOT, and the faithful CHRISTIAN, (characters never to be separated from each other, in such a community as ours,) will seek the safety, honour, and welfare of his country, in the stability of its Laws, its Institutions, its Government, its Religion: and this he will seek, not in the variable devices and fluctuating policy of human imagination; but in steadfast adherence to the declared Will of God; in the wisdom and knowledge that the Divine Word has imparted; in the fear, and love, and obedience, on which alone the Divine Blessing may be expected. Hence flow the perennial

springs of NATIONAL GREATNESS; and hence are derived those social and personal virtues which constitute the perfection of NATIONAL CHARACTER. Then only may it be said of us, as of God's people of old, "Surely this "great nation is a wise and understanding "people." God grant, that amidst all our follies and iniquities, our perverseness and ingratitude, our recklessness both of His judgments and His mercies, we may yet look to HIM as our hope and refuge; and escape that condemnation, of all others the most fearful and the most irrecoverable, "O ISRAEL, THOU "HAST DESTROYED THYSELF."

SERMON VIII.[a]

MATTHEW vii. 16.
Ye shall know them by their fruits.

IN our blessed Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, many erroneous opinions which the Jews had imbibed from their corrupt teachers are censured and corrected. The genuine precepts of the Mosaic Law are contrasted with the perverse interpretations of the Jewish Scribes, and with the unauthorized traditions which they had engrafted upon the Law itself. The hypocrisy also of these arrogant instructors is laid open, and means are pointed out of detecting their delusive sophistries. All this was necessary for the vindication of that Law which in itself was holy, just, and good, and to rescue it from the hands of these evil-minded expositors. It was necessary also for others as well as for the Jews, that a rule of conduct so perfect and so unerring, possessing the full force of a Divine and infallible authority, should

[a] This and the following Sermons are now for the first time printed.

be shewn to be capable of *universal* application, and intended to form an essential part of that dispensation which our Lord came into the world to promulgate and to establish. Not only, therefore, does he guard his hearers specifically against certain particular errors and misinterpretations which had then crept in among them; but he applies, both for *their* use and for the benefit of all who might *thereafter* become his disciples, such illustrations and such tests of sound doctrine, as would best secure them against delusion of every kind. Among these, the admonition contained in the passage from which the words of the text are taken, appears to be one of the most simple, and the most decisive. "Beware of false prophets, "which come to you in sheep's clothing, but "inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye "shall know them by their fruits. Do men "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? "Even so every good tree bringeth forth "good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth "forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring "forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree "bring forth good fruit. Every tree that "bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, "and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their "fruits ye shall know them."

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that by "false prophets" are here intended, not persons falsely pretending to the gift of prophecy, but false teachers of religious doctrine, and misinterpreters of the Sacred Word; such as the Jewish Scribes and Pharisees, against whom our Lord's animadversions were primarily directed. The sequel of the discourse, however, clearly shews that the admonition was designed for more general application; to Christian as well as to Jewish teachers; to all who should acknowledge Christ for their Lord and Master; to all, of whatever description, who should either pretend to new revelations of the Divine will, or to interpret those which had already been made known.

I proceed, then, to consider, in what sense, and under what limitations, this general maxim is to be received,—"By their fruits "ye shall know them;"—or, in other words, how we are to apply it as a test of religious doctrine.

That every one who exercises the office of a religious teacher is under an especial obligation to become an ensample to others "in "faith, in conversation, in charity, in purity," can hardly be called in question; nor, indeed, that "every one" (whether teacher or disciple)

"who nameth the name of Christ" should "depart from iniquity." Yet that such is not invariably the case, is evident. Neither can it be denied, on the other hand, that the most erroneous religious persuasions may be accompanied with such blameless outward demeanour, as to excite strong prepossessions in favour of the opinions delivered. It may also happen, that the most ill-designing men, intent upon propagating religious delusions, or even disseminating irreligion and infidelity, exhibit the exterior of such correct and virtuous conduct as will tend greatly to recommend their tenets to acceptance.

Implicit reliance, therefore, can hardly be placed upon testimony of this kind. Nor does it appear to be that to which our Lord intended *exclusively* to refer; since of the false teachers against whom he warns his followers, he says expressly, they "*come to* "*you in sheep's clothing;*"—their exterior conduct betokens qualities the most harmless and inoffensive;—"*but inwardly they are raven-* "*ing wolves;*"—under the garb of sanctity or innocence they conceal principles or intentions the most destructive. The *fruits*, therefore, which are to bring their doctrines to the test, cannot be merely that deportment which may serve the very purpose of deception; but

must be something discoverable in the spirit and tendency of the doctrine delivered by them, as well as in its practical effect upon themselves or others.

This is farther evident from our Lord's admonishing his disciples, even while he severely reproves the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, not to despise their authority, nor to disregard the Law of which they were the appointed teachers:—"The Scribes and "Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all, therefore, "whatsoever they bid you observe, that ob-"serve and do: but do not ye after their "works; for they say, and do not." Their defect of practice was no proof of the unsoundness of their doctrine; nor did their plausible appearance of sanctity justify their perverse expositions of the Law. By that Law itself were both their faith and practice to be judged; and whether the one or the other might be safely followed, would depend upon its conformity with the known will of God.

Applying, then, this rule to other teachers as well as to the Jewish, we see that it relates rather to the tendency of the doctrine itself to produce good fruits, than to the actual exemplification of its effects in the persons by whom it is taught. Where *Revelation* is

concerned, the main point to be ascertained is the conformity of the doctrine with that which has the sanction of Divine authority. Whatever springs from *that* root is adapted to bear fruits acceptable to God. Whatever is of an opposite character, however specious in appearance, will prove delusive and unsound. "A *good* tree," one that is planted by our heavenly Father, "cannot bring forth "*evil* fruit;" it is contrary to its nature so to do. "Neither can a *corrupt* tree," one not planted by a Divine hand, but the offspring of human vanity and presumption, "bring "forth *good* fruit." It has directly evil tendencies, from the very circumstance of its contrariety to the Divine will. Not only all false pretensions to Divine authority, but all practical deviation from that authority, are denounced by our Lord as excluding men from the favour of God;—"Not every one "that saith unto me, Lord, Lord;"—not every one who uses my name or authority to give currency to his own devices;—"shall "enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he "that doeth the will of my Father which is "in heaven;"—he who, from the pure motive of obedience to God's will, frames both his creed and his conduct according to that unerring standard.

At the end of this discourse it is added by the Evangelist, that our Lord "spake as one "having *authority*, and not as the Scribes." This throws additional light on the subject before us. The mighty works which had been done by him in the presence of his hearers, gave him an irresistible claim to their entire reception of his doctrine. In this discourse he had clearly laid down the nature of that spiritual kingdom which he came to establish, and the dispositions requisite for their admission into it. He assumed to himself the character of the "Light of "the world," and taught men to look to his authority and his example for a rule of faith and practice. Thenceforward, every instructor of religious truth might be justly called upon either to produce equal authority for preaching *other* doctrines, or to mould his instructions in strict conformity with the heavenly pattern set before him.

To those who *now* enjoy the light of the Gospel, the application of this test can be a matter of little difficulty. The Sacred Volume is the only infallible guide to truth. They who are in possession of it must "be "no more children, tossed to and fro, and "carried about with every wind of doctrine," but "in understanding be men;" resolute in

"holding fast the form of sound words which "they have received," and "ready always to "give a *reason* of the hope that is in them;"—a reason grounded on the irrefragable claims of Holy Writ to their unqualified acceptance. This rule, it is obvious, includes every point of *faith*, as well as of practice. Whatever doctrine is set forth, under the semblance of Christianity, having a tendency to depreciate the value of the Redemption wrought for us, by encouraging a reliance upon our own merits rather than on the only true ground of acceptance, the Atonement made for our transgressions by the blood of Christ, is a doctrine productive of *corrupt* fruits. Equally so is that which either denies the necessity, or disparages the efficacy, of the Holy Spirit, in enabling men to work out their salvation; not only because this, as well as the undervaluing of our Lord's Atonement, is directly at variance with the express declarations of Holy Writ; but also because both the one and the other cannot fail to generate an arrogant self-sufficiency, vicious in itself, unbecoming the creature towards his Creator, still more unbecoming a guilty offender towards his Omnipotent and Omniscient Judge, and subversive of every one of those characteristic qualities and dispositions to which

our Lord annexed especial blessings at the very commencement of his public ministry. In like manner, whatever tends to lessen men's apprehensions of the danger of "con-"tinuing in sin, that grace may abound," or to weaken their conviction of the necessity of practical obedience, by magnifying the efficacy of Faith, so as to hold out an assurance of salvation without regard to these necessary evidences of its internal influence, is no less delusive and pernicious. If any may be called "evil fruits," surely *they* may be called so which tend to depreciate, if not to annihilate, so essential a part of the Christian Covenant as that which comprises the whole circle of Christian duty, the "living soberly, "righteously, and godly, in this present "world."

These observations may suffice to shew that the maxim, "Ye shall know them by "their fruits," cannot but include the obvious tendency of the opinions to produce those inward dispositions, together with the outward conduct, which are expressly denominated "the fruits of the Spirit," in contradistinction to "the works of the flesh;" and which are, throughout the New Testament, represented as essential to Christian perfection. And not only are these requisite to

enable us to distinguish "false prophets" from true, among the teachers who profess to instruct men in Gospel truth; but they are no less requisite to enable us personally to *judge ourselves*, on that all-important and most searching question, whether "we are not "of them who draw back unto perdition, but "of them that believe to the saving of the "soul."

Nevertheless, it has long been a favourite notion with a certain description of reasoners, that no man's *faith* can be essentially wrong, whose *life* is in the right; that *sincerity* alone is indispensable; and that God may be acceptably served by persons of the most opposite persuasions, if their lives and actions correspond with their professions. In these positions, there is a certain portion of truth mixed with error, which renders it so much the more necessary to examine on what foundation they are built.

That a good life is the fit criterion of a sound faith, may be admitted, if the expression be taken in its largest and most comprehensive signification. But we must consider well what is meant by a *good life*. A good life properly denotes that which is regulated by one and the same sound principle in *all* points of duty; in duty towards God, as well

as towards our *neighbour;* in submission of the *understanding*, as well as of the *heart*, to the Divine will; in "worshipping, serving, "and obeying" our heavenly Father, no less than in "doing unto all men as we would "they should do unto us." It includes, therefore, whatever relates either to our belief or our practice; not only every thing that passes in the sight of the world between man and man, but every thing that passes in secret between God and our own consciences. Unless it embrace all these points, it will form but a very defective criterion; and the tree that will not abide this test, however attractive in appearance, may deserve to be "hewn down, and cast into the fire."

Again; however highly we may value *sincerity*, (and we can hardly set too high a value upon it, since without it there can be no vital Religion, and we are taught that "the hope of the *hypocrite* shall perish,") yet we must not attach to this single quality such a character as would make it representative of all *other* virtues, nor so vague and indefinite a meaning as would make it an apology for every strange imagination which human vanity or corruption may suggest. Mere sincerity will be pleaded by many who boldly dispute the revelation of God's will, as well

as by those who meekly receive it. The Schismatic, the Heretic, the Jew, the Turk, the Infidel, will all advance this specious plea; and may all advance it with equal propriety, if no distinction is to be made between an *erroneous* conscience and a conscience rightly informed; between the disposition which leads men carefully to investigate the principles of conduct, and that which forms precipitate judgments, using no precautions against misrepresentation or mispersuasion. For though it be perfectly true, that "a man is accepted according to that he "hath, and not according to that he hath "not," (and therefore we may charitably hope and believe that multitudes who err through invincible ignorance will at last obtain mercy,) yet this applies not where the error may be traced to perverseness in the *will*, and where men presumptuously make choice of that which is in opposition to the known will of God.

It seems to be with reference to errors of this description, that our Lord uses that strongly figurative illustration of their absurdity, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or "figs of thistles?" The parable of the Good Seed and the Tares is also of similar tendency. And nearly to the same effect is that

expostulation of the Almighty with his Vineyard, the Jewish Church, "Wherefore, when "I looked that it should bring forth grapes, "brought it forth wild grapes?" All these imply that the excellence of the produce depends, in the first instance, on the *principle* of human conduct. *Faith* in God is the seed, or principle of *Christian* conduct; *obedience* is the fruit. Virtues of any other growth, however specious in appearance, have not the same characteristic qualities; they want that which is essentially requisite to their acceptance by the great Lord of the Vineyard: and wanting *that*, they shew that they are fruits of a different kind from those which are of spiritual growth. And this explains what is said in one of the Articles of our Church, respecting works which "spring not of faith "in Jesus Christ," that being "not done as "God hath willed and commanded them to "be done," they "have the nature of sin;" an assertion only to be understood as equivalent to our Lord's declaration, "Every plant "which my heavenly Father hath not planted "shall be rooted up."

There is an opposite error, however, against which it is equally necessary to caution the professed disciple of Christ, and which the admonition in the text no less pointedly re-

futes. Many "name the name of Christ," who are not careful to "depart from iniquity," or to "walk worthy of the vocation "wherewith they are called." Some do this through mere wantonness and inconsideration; some from habitual worldly-mindedness, which draws them off from spiritual things; some from erroneous views of the doctrine of Justification by Faith, as if it superseded the necessity of cultivating those Christian virtues, which are so often represented in Holy Writ as inseparable from a *saving* faith, and indispensable to our becoming "*meet* to be partakers of an inheritance "with the saints in light." Against all these, it might be sufficient to urge the declaration, "By their fruits ye shall know them," as passing upon them a sentence of unqualified condemnation. But if further illustration be desired, consider our Lord's parable of the "barren fig-tree," no less emblematical of the unprofitable Christian, than of the impenitent and incorrigible Jew. That tree is represented as of goodly appearance, thriving and flourishing, with fair promise of fruit:—but there was found *none*. And what is the mere *formal* profession of Christianity, or even the most confident pretensions to sanctity and experimental knowledge of salvation,

without a corresponding influence upon the life and conversation, but "leaves without "fruit?" What is it but the worthless tree, against which the sentence will assuredly go forth, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the "ground?"

That these remarks, however trite or obvious, are not superseded as to their necessity by any greater progress towards Christian perfection in these than in former times, it requires little labour to prove. Whoever mixes much in society will frequently hear eulogies bestowed upon conduct that will ill bear the scrutiny of Christian examination. The moral qualities of the philosophical unbeliever, the orthodoxy of the mere formalist, the spiritual fervour of the fanatic or the devotee, will meet with many admirers, and be lauded by the world as patterns of excellence. Yet apply the test, in its full extent, of judging them by their *fruits;* and what will be the result? If it be a *moral* duty (which can hardly be denied even upon any view of the subject) to receive with reverence and submission whatever is sufficiently attested as a revelation from God, will the Deist, however virtuous in other respects, be virtuous in setting up his own understanding or will in opposition to that of his Maker, or

even in neglecting to make due inquiry and examination into the proofs that such a revelation has been made? If he obstinately declines this investigation, and yet maintains his disbelief, what are his claims to candour or integrity? And if to this indifference to the truth, he adds the spirit of *proselytism* in disseminating his opinions, can the *fruits* of his labours be otherwise than most pernicious?

What shall we say, again, of the orthodox *formalist* in religion, who wraps himself up in the conscious superiority of polemical skill, and is quick-sighted in discovering every flaw in the creed of others, but little heedful of those milder graces of the Christian character which diffuse its benefits far and wide, or perhaps of that personal vigilance and self-discipline, without which the most accurate and profound *knowledge* of the truth will be powerless as to any spiritual improvement, and bring no fruit to perfection? Institute also the same inquiry respecting the most ardent promoter of what he deems *evangelical* truth, who, in his zeal for the glory of God and the riches of his grace, overlooks the practical consequences of his doctrine, and leads the ignorant and unwary to rely upon partial and imperfect views of this dispensa-

tion of mercy and truth, by resting on its *promises* only, to the neglect of its *conditions*. Will the fruits of *such* doctrine be good and praiseworthy, however strong the self-persuasion of their saving effect?

The same application might be made of this test to almost every species of religious error; to every one, at least, that puts to hazard doctrines of *essential* importance to the Christian character; since there is no essential truth in Revelation which is purely *speculative*, none which is not immediately connected with practical duty. Even its most mysterious doctrines, so far as they are revealed to us, are productive of great moral consequences, by their influence on the heart and the affections, by their enlargement of the intellectual faculties, by the objects of contemplation they present to the mind, and by the insight they give us into the great purposes for which we were created, and the duties thence incumbent upon us towards God and man.

This inseparable connection between faith and practice, as it evidently forms the basis of our Lord's admonition in the text, so ought it ever to be kept in view as the main preservative against inculcating a dry, spiritless, heathenish kind of morality on the one hand,

and an intoxicating, fanatical, and presumptuous spirit on the other. Together with our Lord's maxim, we may take with us, whether in judging ourselves or others, St. Peter's comprehensive rule, "Add to your "faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; "and to knowledge, temperance; and to "temperance, patience; and to patience, god-"liness; and to godliness, brotherly kind-"ness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. "For if these things be in you, and abound, "they make you that ye shall neither be bar-"ren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our "Lord Jesus Christ." *These* are the fruits by which the true disciples of Christ are to be discerned. Ye shall know whether your *teachers* are leading you in the way wherein ye should go, by this conformity of their doctrine with the pure word of God, and by their instructions to "hold the faith in unity of "spirit, in the bond of peace, and in right-"eousness of life." Ye shall know whether ye *yourselves* are in the way of salvation, by first "examining yourselves whether ye be in "the faith," and next considering what effect that faith produces on your life and conversation. In these inquiries, no prejudices, no partialities must be suffered to warp the judgment; since on the issue of them de-

pends the everlasting welfare both of soul and body. Let not the ardour of faith supersede vigilance in practical duties; neither let any conceit of self-righteousness, or vain reliance on human strength, lead to a disregard of those primary and fundamental truths of the Gospel, that Atonement through Christ, and that Sanctification through the Holy Spirit, without which not one of the fallen race of man can be assured of acceptance.

"If we would judge ourselves," says St. Paul, "we should not be judged." That we may be enabled so to do in an effective manner, let us go to the throne of Grace, and pray for help to Him who "giveth liberally, "and upbraideth not." Let us beseech him to "take from us all ignorance, hardness of "heart, and contempt of his word;" and say, with the fervency of the devout Psalmist, "Try me, O God, and search out the reins "of my heart: look well if there be *any* way "of wickedness in me; and lead me in the "way everlasting."

SERMON IX.

JOHN XX. 29.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

IT is no inconsiderable proof of the credibility of the Christian religion, that some of its first disciples and teachers had been slow in their belief of it, and had required more than ordinary means of conviction to remove their doubts and misapprehensions. Notwithstanding they were daily witnesses of such wonders as might be expected to overwhelm ordinary minds, and to subdue even the most stubborn; yet do we find the Apostles themselves not unfrequently interposing questions and surmises which indicated something of a wavering disposition; and calling for additional signs and tokens, when more than might reasonably be demanded had already been vouchsafed.

It is no less a proof of the veracity of the Sacred Writers, that they have not been

backward in recording these seemingly untoward circumstances respecting their fellow-labourers in the Gospel. It betokens on their part, not only entire confidence in the truth of what they narrated, but also a full persuasion that to all who duly weighed those particulars, the doubt which they might seem at first to cast upon the truth itself, would, in the result, serve more abundantly to confirm it, and to place it on a more immovable basis.

The Apostles and Evangelists are indeed, in these, as in other respects, entirely unexceptionable witnesses. They had no interests, no prepossessions, which could give them an undue bias in favour of the doctrines they promulgated. To adhere to a crucified Master, "despised and rejected of men," treated with scorn by their rulers, and put to an ignominious death, could be no inviting prospect to men who had any worldly object in view. Nor were the Apostles themselves exempt from the prejudices which led their fellow-countrymen to expect in the Messiah a temporal potentate and conqueror, who should reinstate them as a nation, triumph over their enemies, and establish a new and extended kingdom upon earth. Their feelings of this kind were frequently betrayed

in their conversations with their Lord; and although invariably checked and reproved by him, yet do they appear never to have been wholly eradicated whilst he continued among them.

It is not to be wondered at, that men who had strongly imbibed such persuasions should deeply feel the mortification arising from disappointment in this respect. It is not surprising that they ventured even to remonstrate with their Master, when he forewarned them of his sufferings;—that, on his apprehension by the civil power, one of them denied him, and the rest forsook him and fled; —that, after his death, some of them began to lament their mistake in having "trusted "that it was he who should redeem Israel;" —or, that not without some previous mistrust and misgivings they at last gave way to that full tide of joy and exultation, which the irresistible proofs of his Resurrection forced upon them.

The testimony of such men is surely invaluable. It is that of men who, far from being hastily predetermined, were not convinced but by the most overpowering evidence. The wonders they had seen and heard during their Lord's intercourse with them, the assurances he had given them, the

affection and reverence they undoubtedly felt towards him, were insufficient entirely to remove their perplexities; until the last triumphant acts of Divine power, in his Resurrection and Ascension, were verified to their senses, beyond the possibility of contradiction.

I have made these introductory observations, not with the intent of entering more fully into the conduct of the Apostles in general, but chiefly to direct your attention to the remarkable incident adverted to in the text, respecting the conduct of the Apostle, *Thomas*, on our Lord's Resurrection, and to the observation made upon it by our Lord himself;—"Thomas, because thou hast *seen* "me, thou hast believed: blessed are they "who have *not seen*, and yet have believed."

Thomas appears to have had somewhat more of hesitation and slowness of belief than the other Apostles. On a previous occasion, when our Lord was discoursing on his departure from this world, and his going to prepare a place for them, Thomas interposed certain doubts, which drew from our Saviour a mild reproof of his want of confidence in HIM, as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." On the event of our Lord's Resurrection, this disposition was more remarkably shewn. The

whole company of the Apostles (Thomas only excepted) had already seen Jesus, and were assured of his personal identity. They communicated this to Thomas, and said unto him, "We have seen the Lord." But even their joint testimony satisfied him not. He determined that nothing but the evidence of his own senses should be sufficient:—"Except I "shall see in his hands the print of the nails, "and put my finger into the print of the "nails, and thrust my hands into his side, I "will not believe;" and had not our Lord vouchsafed to offer him this very proof, possibly this chosen disciple might have continued incredulous.

Doubtless, however, our Lord, who "knew "what was in man," perceived that the mind of this disciple was influenced, not by any stubborn indisposition to the truth, but rather by fears and apprehensions lest that which, if true, was a fact of such unspeakable importance, should at last prove to have been an error or illusion. The ardour of his zeal, and the strength of his affection, might be no less powerful and sincere than that of his fellow-disciples; and only wanted the same degree of confirmation to determine him to embrace the truth. Within a few days, his sincerity, on this point, was put to

the test. Suddenly our Lord appeared again to the whole assembly of the Apostles, Thomas himself included. It is evident, that no previous intimation had been given to our Lord of the incredulity of this Apostle; no interview with any of the disciples, since that when Thomas was absent, having then taken place. But, exercising that omniscience which was ever at his command, instantly our Lord addresses himself to the doubtful disciple, in terms calculated at once to force conviction upon him, and to excite his gratitude and veneration:—"Jesus said to him, Thomas, "reach hither thy finger, and behold my "hands; and reach hither thy hand, and "thrust it into my side: and be not faith-"less, but believing. And Thomas answered "and said, My LORD and my GOD!" Immediately the doubts of the Apostle vanished. It was enough, that his blessed Master stood before him, and challenged him to the proof he had required. It does not appear from the narrative, that he even availed himself of the permission given to examine the bodily marks of the crucifixion. It was enough, that his heavenly Lord had penetrated his inmost thoughts, and thus condescended to his infirmities. He waits for no further evidence. The *Divinity* of the Saviour of the

world bursts upon him, and he addresses him in terms of direct and unqualified *adoration*. Nor was this a transient emotion only. Thenceforth he became devoted to his service. History records that he was among those who successfully preached the Gospel to the remotest parts of the earth, and died a martyr to the Faith.

The *reproof*, however, with which this condescension on the part of our Lord was accompanied, affords matter of awful consideration;—"Thomas, because thou hast *seen* me, "thou hast believed:"—thou wast faithless and unbelieving, although my other disciples had assured thee of the certainty of my resurrection:—"Blessed are they who have *not* "*seen*, and yet have *believed*:"—the rest of mankind, in after-ages, can have no such *personal* testimony offered to them as that which *thou* hast just experienced:—*they* must believe without seeing me; nay, without seeing or hearing those who conversed with me here on earth;—yet will there be, throughout all ages, sufficient evidence to satisfy every reasonable inquirer into the truth of what relates to me:—and blessed shall they be who do not resist such evidence; who plead not thy example in excuse for their want of faith, nor desire further proofs than

those which the providence of God shall have placed within their reach.

This admonition affords a salutary caution against some of the most plausible pretences of unbelievers; one of which is expressly founded upon the incident we are now considering. Thomas's alleged incredulity has been pleaded in justification of the incredulity of those who, in these latter times, refuse their assent to any evidence short of that which *he* required,—*the evidence of their own senses;*—and who consequently reject every historical, every argumentative proof, that can be set before them.

Is there, then, any real weight in this plea? Does the case of St. Thomas afford any reasonable excuse for unbelief, under the circumstances in which the proofs of Christianity are *now* presented to us? To the consideration of this single point, I shall confine the few brief observations which will occupy the remainder of this discourse.

First, then, the case of Thomas was, in its most striking particulars, essentially different from that of unbelievers of the present day. Certainly Thomas was not blameless, in withholding his assent to the testimony of the other Apostles. Yet let us consider his peculiar circumstances. Here was the greatest

of all miracles that had hitherto been seen or heard of, that of a person *raising himself* from the dead. It had so happened, that he was the only Apostle absent, when our Lord shewed himself to the other ten. Might he not hope that his gracious Lord and Master would vouchsafe to *him* also similar means of conviction? It is hardly possible to suppose any unworthy *disinclination*, on his part, to be convinced of the reality of an event, by which every joyful hope and expectation that had almost died away might again revive. If, then, for a while he suspended his belief, trusting that from him alone of the chosen Apostles such proof would not be withholden, his hesitation, though not altogether excusable, neither indicated "an evil heart of un-"belief," nor a perverse opposition to the truth. It might be infirmity, rather than prejudice; doubt arising from excessive anxiety, rather than from a disposition to discredit the report. *Judas*, had *he* survived the event of his Lord's Resurrection, was the only one of the Twelve who could have dreaded his reappearance, or have desired to disbelieve it. All the rest, and Thomas not less than the others, could not but rejoice in it, when verified and confirmed, as it subsequently was, even by *reiterated* proofs,

and such as precluded every possibility of doubt.

In the next place, this very instance of Thomas's slowness of belief, and his desire of having *personal* evidence of the event, renders those unbelievers of the present day inexcusable, who refuse their assent even to the testimony of *this* Apostle, after his doubts had been overcome.

In every case of importance to be decided by human testimony, we invariably deem *that* evidence the most unexceptionable, which is borne by persons who have not hastily given credence to what they had heard from others; but, exercising more than ordinary caution, yielded only to proofs which could not rationally be withstood. Suppose, in a court of judicature, a trial for life or death. Witnesses, many in number, and against whom no reasonable ground of distrust can be alleged, concur in affirming some particular fact, to which they were all at the same time present. Undoubtedly it would argue a strange degree of scepticism, to disbelieve such testimony, on a bare surmise that they might too readily have trusted to the evidence of their own senses. But suppose to these is added *another* witness, who had shewn much reluctance in trusting to those who had

gone before him, and had resolved to judge only from his own personal knowledge of the fact. Would not this single witness be *more* relied upon, than if he had never *doubted?* Every one at all conversant with the weight of comparative testimony, would immediately answer in the affirmative; and, in the administration of public justice, such instances, when they occur, seldom fail to be regarded as decisive of the matter to be proved.

Now this is precisely the case with regard to the Apostle Thomas. No reasonable person could well doubt the truth of our Lord's Resurrection, upon the joint testimony of the *other* Apostles, whether Thomas had had this ocular demonstration of it, or not. But when we find *him* first *hesitating* to believe it, and afterwards constrained by the force of such irresistible evidence, not only to believe it, but to express that belief in the strongest possible terms of astonishment and delight, we naturally rest upon *his* assurance of the event as incapable of deceiving us. We scarcely feel a wish for further proof. We have before us a man to whom *credulity* at least cannot be imputed; one whose hopes, however ardent, did not betray him into a momentary surrender of his reason and understanding, and whose judgment could not

possibly be misled by any corrupt or sinister purpose.

We have only, then, to apply these considerations to the state of the question, as it *at present* stands, between believers and unbelievers, in order to discern how little advantage the latter can derive from the case of St. Thomas.

The weight of evidence, it is pretended, *diminishes by length of time.* We cannot, it is said, have the same certainty of events which occurred many ages since, as of those which took place a century ago, or in our own times. And even had they come to pass in *our own* times, they who did not actually *see* them are not obliged to receive them upon the report of others. The example of Thomas is cited as a case in point. These enlightened sceptics contend, that they only reason as *he* did;—that they only require such demonstration as was afforded to *him*, before they yield assent.

It is easy to see through the flimsy veil of this miserable sophistry. Do these self-sufficient reasoners seriously give credit to the honest, unprejudiced disposition of the Apostle, when he was backward in receiving the truth, and cautious in believing it? Why, then, do they not yield to his *subsequent*

conviction? Why will they suppose him *honest* in first *doubting*, and yet *dishonest* in afterwards *believing?* If his authority be good in the former case, is it not equally so in the latter? If they deem him trustworthy, and a fit example for others, while his faith was yet unfixed, why withdraw that confidence from him, why repudiate his example, when he became steadfast, determinate, immovable?

But, with reference to the present state of the question, it is indeed a mere fallacy to affirm that the evidences of Christianity have materially diminished by lapse of time, or that sufficient certainty of events, whether past or present, may not be obtained through the testimony of *others*, as well as from our own personal knowledge. The providence of God hath so ordained, that occurrences the most remote as to time or distance may be verified to us by various concurrent circumstances, which render it morally impossible that we should be deceived concerning them. And it may even happen, that by length of time proofs of this kind are so strengthened, and so accumulated, as to give additional confidence to our belief.

In the history of Christianity this has been most wonderfully exemplified. It is impossible to account even for the *existence* of the

Christian Religion at the present moment, without giving credit to its Sacred Records. We trace it through all ages, backwards from the present time to the very date of its commencement, in a regular unbroken chain of history. The life and character of our Saviour, and of his Apostles, the miracles wrought in confirmation of the Gospel, the doctrines delivered in it, the peculiar rites and institutions founded upon it, all precisely correspond, as to their date and their first reception in the world, with those very records. The facts are moreover, to a considerable extent, and in several striking particulars, attested by *Heathen* as well as Christian writers. They have been admitted by unbelievers as well as believers, both by adversaries and by friends. Still more strongly have they been confirmed by the word of *Prophecy;* a species of evidence which, from the very nature of it, increases in force in proportion to the length of time between the prediction and its fulfilment. Several of the most remarkable prophecies in Holy Writ are of this description; not only those which foretold the coming of our Saviour many ages before his birth, but those also which related to the destruction of Jerusalem, to the dispersion of the Jews over all the earth, (a prophecy *now* no less mani-

festly going on in its accomplishment, than when it first commenced,) also to the overthrow of Paganism in the Roman empire, and to various changes, trials, and troubles, which the Church of Christ hath undergone since the period of our Lord's departure from the world. Here is a marvellous accession of proofs, from which believers in these latter ages are continually deriving greater and greater confirmation of the faith, and more full assurance that they are not following "cunningly-devised fables."

There is also another advantage which we *now* possess, beyond that enjoyed by Christians who were contemporary with the Apostles. We have the *collected writings* of several of the Apostles preserved for the edification of the Church; affording a greater mass of evidence, and of doctrine, than, perhaps, could ever have been obtained, by oral instruction, before these documents were brought into general circulation. These we can now *compare* together; we can examine their agreement with each other; and where a doubt arises as to the sense of one writer, or of one passage in any writing, we are enabled to illustrate and confirm it by reference to other portions of the Canonical Scriptures. Such advantages are inestimable in our researches

after truth. Every difficulty, every perplexity, has the fairest chance of being unravelled or removed. Unbelievers also have the opportunity of sifting and investigating every thing which they may think open to suspicion, and of assailing Christianity wherever they may deem it vulnerable. Where such means are resorted to, on either side, with an honest and unprejudiced mind, with singleness of heart, and sincerity of purpose;—in short, with a real desire to find the truth;—a blessing will assuredly attend the labour. "If any man *will do the will of God*, he shall "*know* of the doctrine, whether it be of "God."

To sum up, then, in few words, all that has been here intended. The Apostles *saw* and *believed*. They neither closed their eyes, nor shut their ears, against the proofs and evidences that were set before them. And what these living witnesses thus saw and heard, they have recorded for the knowledge and information of after-times. "Blessed," therefore, "are they who have *not seen*, and "yet have *believed*." Blessed are they, who thankfully accept the light thus shining upon them, through the medium of those inspired Teachers. Blessed are they, who acknowledge, in the Sacred Oracles bequeathed to

us, the voice and testimony of God himself, making known the certainty of that salvation wrought by his beloved Son, and declaring what we are to believe and do, that we may inherit Life Eternal.

Say not, then, that you want *better* evidence to satisfy you of these momentous truths. Put not your salvation to hazard, by adopting the scoffs and cavils of the libertine and blasphemer. Call to mind the faith and constancy, the doctrine and conduct, the spirit and power, which marked the lives and actions of the Apostles, throughout their eventful history. Remember that *Peter*, who had once *denied* his Lord;—that *Thomas*, who, during a short interval of suspense, *doubted* his Resurrection;—that *Paul*, who had been once a grievous *persecutor* of the disciples of Christ;—that all these became, not only thorough converts to the truth, but were among the foremost in their subsequent labours for the Gospel;—and that even *Judas*, the traitor, *repented*, when too late, of his apostasy and treachery. What will "convince the gainsayers," if such examples as these fail to produce their effect? Or who shall set his own surmises and suspicions in competition with such testimonies as these? God grant, that, duly pondering these things,

we may all "so perfectly, and without all "doubt, believe in his Son Jesus Christ, that "our faith in his sight may never be re-"proved;" and that finally we may "receive "the *end* of our faith, even *the salvation of* "*our souls!*"

SERMON X.

1 Cor. xiii. 5.

Charity . . . thinketh no evil.

AMONG the boasted attainments of the present age, (an age, perhaps, somewhat too much addicted to boasting,) none appears to be more loudly vaunted than that which is denominated *Liberality of Sentiment.* At no period, it is said, was there ever manifested so conciliating a disposition towards characters and opinions of whatever kind, as that which distinguishes the present generation. The time of Bigotry and Intolerance is gone by. Prejudices are daily diminishing and disappearing. The mind is no longer shackled with the fetters of undue authority. Mankind are becoming more and more enlightened: and with the fresh accessions of knowledge every where springing up, are introduced a spirit of free inquiry, and habits of unrestrained discussion, on topics of every description, which produce the happiest effects,

in the enlargement of men's intellectual faculties, and in leading them to think favourably of all who indulge in the same latitude of opinion, however different may be the result of their investigations, or however opposite the principles and the practices by which those investigations are conducted. And thus are we represented to have at length arrived, or nearly so, at that perfection of Candour and Benevolence, which *Christianity* itself inculcates, and which exalts the human character to its highest pitch of excellence.

Such are the pretensions continually advanced in favour of the times on which we have fallen: pretensions, high-sounding, indeed, and captivating; but not to be admitted without careful examination; lest we should be found, under the appearance of cultivating one of the most estimable graces of the Christian character, to be, in effect, encouraging that which is hostile to the true spirit of our Religion, and incompatible with some of its most important precepts.

With those who admit the authority of the Sacred Writings, no rule is more unquestionable, than that *Scripture is to be interpreted by Scripture;* so that the nature and limits of each particular duty that is enjoined may be determined by reference to other injunc-

tions equally authoritative in their kind. By this rule, then, let us proceed to examine that branch of Christian Charity which St. Paul has delineated in the words of the text; endeavouring to form a just estimate of the pretensions alluded to, by comparing them with the standard of Scriptural Truth.

That Charity "*thinketh no evil*" is a general maxim, admitting (like all other general propositions) certain restrictions and modifications. It can hardly be supposed to mean, that Charity thinks *equally well* of all men; that it entertains the same regard for the good as for the bad; or that it obliges us to overcome that abhorrence of evil which is essential to the very character of goodness. This it were impossible to do with sincerity; and pernicious, if it could be done. We are constrained, therefore, to seek for some other interpretation of its meaning.

Purity of principle, simplicity, and *sincerity of heart,* are every where inculcated, or presupposed, in Holy Writ, as indispensable to our acceptance with God. "Blessed are the "*pure in heart;* for they shall see God." "The wisdom that is from above is *first* "*pure,* then peaceable." "Let love be *with-* "*out dissimulation.*" "*Abhor* that which is "*evil; cleave* to that which is *good.*" "Let

"your conversation be such as becometh the "Gospel of Christ; that ye may be blameless "and harmless, the sons of God without re-"buke, in the midst of a crooked and per-"verse generation, among whom ye shine as "lights in the world."

Firmness and *perseverance* in maintaining what is holy, just, and true, are no less unequivocally enjoined. "Beware, lest being "led away by the error of the wicked, ye "fall from your own steadfastness." "Prove "all things; hold fast that which is good." "Contend earnestly for the Faith." "Have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of "darkness." "Withdraw yourselves from "every brother that walketh disorderly." "Mark them which cause divisions and of-"fences, and avoid them."

Nor do the Apostolical injunctions extend only to the careful preservation of *our own* integrity, but to our earnest endeavours to *correct* and *amend others*. "Reprove, rebuke, "exhort." "Convince the gainsayers." "Warn "them that are unruly." "He that convert-"eth a sinner from the error of his way, shall "save a soul from death, and hide a multi-"tude of sins."

These admonitions sufficiently prove that genuine Christian Candour is totally unlike

that counterfeit representation of it which is *indifferent* to other men's actions or opinions. It is regulated by a due regard to what is pure and upright. It is such as is compatible with a tenacious adherence to the principles of the Gospel, and a firm determination to promote the knowledge and the practice of its most sacred duties.

The more we consider the subject, the more just will this representation of it appear.

Charity, in its full extent, has reference to the *spiritual* as well as *temporal* concerns of our fellow-creatures. The true love of our *Neighbour* must ever be exercised in subordination to the love of God. It requires, therefore, our best exertions to reclaim men from their evil courses, and from opinions or pursuits detrimental to their best interests; as well as the encouragement of their laudable exertions, and the relief of their necessities. To discountenance a man in what is wrong will better prove our kindness towards him, than to connive at his faults: and St. Jude represents it to be as much an act of compassion to endeavour to "save" a person who is in dangerous error, as it would be to "pull him out of the fire."

St. Paul, indeed, carefully guards against any misapprehension of this branch of Chris-

tian Charity, by subjoining, that it "*rejoiceth* "*not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth:*" —whence we learn, that what he had just affirmed of Charity, that it "thinketh no evil," must not be understood to imply that it *approves* or takes *pleasure* in what is *wrong;* since this would be contrary to Charity itself, according to that precept in the Levitical Law, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in "thine heart; thou shalt in anywise rebuke "thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon "him." Neither is it to be imagined that a charitable Christian will be indifferent to the misconduct of others, from any feelings of exultation or self-complacency in comparing it with his own conduct. The Charity here spoken of "rejoiceth in *the Truth.*" It views with tenderness those lapses, or deviations from what is right, which do not originate in *wilful* Error or Perverseness; and which therefore are not to be harshly regarded as indications of a depraved mind. To such cases it is that this rule is chiefly to be extended. In confirmation of which, the Apostle further adds, that Charity "*beareth* all "things, *believeth* all things, *hopeth* all things, "*endureth* all things." It takes no pleasure in aggravating the faults of others, or exposing them to public censure; and would rather

hide them from observation, as far as may be consistent with the honour of God, and the good of mankind. It encourages no vague surmises, no malevolent suspicions; but is tender of the reputation of others, and willing to put the best construction on their conduct. It does not readily despair, even of great offenders, or give them over as incorrigible; but labours with the cheerful hope of bringing them back to a right sense of duty. It makes also, in every case, due allowance for human infirmity, for the strength of temptation, and the power of corruption: and it perseveres in these charitable dispositions and efforts, so long as any sparks of goodness appear to remain.

Let us now compare with this Apostolical delineation of Christian Candour, the spurious virtue so current among us, under the popular appellation of *Liberality of Sentiment.*

According to its most frequent usage, this term appears to denote either a general *indifference* respecting the *sentiments* of those with whom we associate, or a persuasion that every man has a right to entertain what opinions it pleases him to adopt, without being amenable to any tribunal but that of his own private judgment. The term is also very often extended to the *conduct* as well as the

sentiments of others; so far, at least, as relates to those personal offences against which no provision is made by human laws.

Under the influence of this principle, some of the strangest incongruities of character continually occur in every department of social life. The Christian and the blasphemer, the peaceable and the turbulent, the honourable and the fraudulent, the virtuous and the despoiler of virtue, will be found intermingling with each other, as if upon equal terms, and with equal claims to mutual respect and good-will. How far this is consistent with Christian Sincerity, it cannot be difficult to determine; unless, indeed, we accede to another popular notion, that the worst principles and practice may consist with *goodness of heart*, and be, in their consequences, harmless.

If, however, it be said, that this is nothing more than a kind of mutual courtesy and forbearance, not involving any actual sacrifice of principle on either side; the answer is, that, upon every correct view of Christian duty, no such courtesy ought to be imagined; since it is in itself a sacrifice of no mean importance, to suffer even the *appearance* of raising Vice, and Falsehood, and Irreligion, to a level with Virtue, Truth, and Piety.

The sacrifice, too, is by no means *mutual*, nor equivalent as to what is lost or gained on either side. On the contrary, it is exclusively made by that party which alone ought to be tenacious of its superiority. For, when such Liberality leads to the suppression or concealment of what is right and good, great *encouragement* is given to what is adverse to these; and the interests of the former cannot but essentially suffer: while, on the other hand, Vice and Irreligion lose nothing by being admitted to a free and unconstrained intercourse with their opposites; but gain so much the greater credit with the world, and spread so much the more extensively their seductive influence.

We cannot wonder, then, that the most vehement advocates of this indiscriminate Liberality of Sentiment are usually to be met with among those who are in these respects the most *interested* in its prevailing influence. We cannot wonder that they whose opinions and conduct will not stand the test of a more rigid scrutiny, are desirous of being sheltered from censure, by the operation of a principle which confers upon *them*, as well as upon the most blameless members of the community, the privilege that none shall "think evil" of them. Nor

can we wonder at the obloquy which such persons are ever ready to cast upon all who cannot be persuaded to acquiesce in this concord of Christ with Belial, this communion of Light with Darkness.

But it may well excite our astonishment, that this attribute of Christian Charity should ever be so perverted and misapplied by men of a higher class; men who, in their own sentiments and practice, endeavour to "walk "worthy of the vocation wherewith they are "called." These persons are seriously called upon to consider, whether that simplicity and singleness of heart which the Gospel enjoins, can consist with such deference as this to popular opinion. "Happy is the man," says the Apostle, "who condemneth not himself "in that thing which he alloweth:" and again, says the same Apostle, "Abstain from "all *appearance* of evil." But how shall these maxims be observed, if we profess to "think "no evil" of that which we cannot but "abhor" as evil; and if we outwardly conform to what we inwardly disapprove? Nor is the injury less to *others*, than to *ourselves*. The same suppression of virtuous sentiments which corrupts our own integrity, wounds the consciences of the weaker brethren among us, while it hardens those who are already in-

clined to evil. In every way, therefore, Truth and Goodness suffer, while Error and Corruption are made to triumph. Neutrality, wherever the interests of Truth, of Virtue, and of Piety, are concerned, is, indeed, of most pernicious tendency; such being the prevalent corruption of mankind, that unless all the weight of *public opinion*, as well as of *private practice*, be thrown into the *right* scale, the balance will soon preponderate in favour of the *wrong:* and in no case will our Lord's maxim be more fully verified, "He "that is not *with* me, is *against* me."

Let it not, however, be imagined that these observations are meant to give encouragement to intolerance, to ill-timed reproofs, to officious interference with other men's conduct, to morose censures of matters indifferent, or to rigid non-compliance with established modes and customs, which, whether laudable or otherwise, involve no abandonment of principles worth contending for. That many well-intentioned persons err through an over-strained scrupulosity, or bring reproach upon the cause they mean to promote, by intemperate and injudicious zeal, cannot be denied. These must also be admonished carefully to consider all the great distinguishing features of that Christian Cha-

rity which St. Paul has so admirably pourtrayed; and to remember, that without the exemplification of those virtues which it comprises, "all our doings are nothing worth." For, "Love is the fulfilling of the Law;" and "with what measure we meet, it shall be "measured to us again."

A word, however, of apology may not be here misplaced, for some who, with no disposition to offend, have not always that self-control which prevents them from giving cause of offence. Accusations of *Uncharitableness* are very frequently raised against men whose irreproachable and exemplary conduct in other respects ought, at least, to shield them from hasty imputations of an unchristian spirit. Great allowance ought also to be made for the *provocation* which good men experience, when they have to encounter Falsehood and Vice. In every well-regulated mind, there arises a sentiment of laudable *indignation* at the perverseness of evil-doers, and towards the disseminators of evil principles, which operates as a powerful safeguard of Truth and Probity, and which may be permitted to plead strongly in excuse for those whose zeal for what is good may occasionally overstep the bounds of moderation. Of such men it is more probable that

their *accusers* should judge uncharitably, than that *they themselves* should foster a malevolent spirit. Charges of this description are readily alleged against the purest characters, when Vice and Folly smart under their correction. But virtuous Indignation is not Uncharitableness; honest Reproof is not Calumny; conscientious Firmness is not Bigotry.

And, after all, do we find that the greatest pretenders to Liberality of Sentiment are, in general, more invulnerable in this respect than those whom they are wont to accuse of harsh dispositions? Too frequently the very reverse of this is to be observed. Who are more ready than the clamorous partizans of Civil and Religious Liberty to inveigh against persons in authority, and to impute to them, on any, or on no grounds whatever, the worst motives and intentions? Who are more forward to overwhelm with reproach or ridicule the sober and reflecting members of the community, than they who seem desirous that every man should "do that which is right in his own "eyes," without molestation or restraint? How many who are indignant that any one should "think evil" of insubordination and disaffection in the State, or of heterodoxy and divisions in the Church, heap the most

undeserved censures upon the advocates of pure Religion and Social Order; while if from these advocates a word of admonition or reproof is returned, instantly the cry is raised of Illiberality and Intolerance? Thus it is, that the terms—freedom of thought—enlarged notions—liberty of discussion—unlimited toleration—and universal benevolence, (terms so fascinating to inexperienced minds,) are continually applied to excuse or to palliate what is wrong, and to cast reproach upon what is right. And thus it is, that (as our great English Moralist happily expresses it) there are "bigots to *laxity*," as well as to *intolerance;* men who, in their zeal for licentiousness, will tolerate none but those who are as licentious as themselves.

But on this, as on most other points, it is often an easier task to recriminate, than it is to exculpate ourselves. Instead, therefore, of multiplying offences, by "rendering evil for "evil, and railing for railing," we may be more profitably employed in rectifying our own conduct.

If, then, it be asked, what *constitutes* Christian Candour, or true Liberality of Sentiment in the *Christian* acceptation of the phrase; the foregoing observations may serve to shew, both negatively what it is *not*, and affirma-

tively what it *is*. It is *not* to think well of that which we know to be evil; but it is to think no evil of that which we have no just cause to condemn. It is *not* to abandon fixed principles of Truth and Probity and Piety; nor is it to give the same countenance to those who abandon, as to those who uphold them. But it is to avoid rash judgment; judgment from appearances only, and not from proof. It is to think well of every man, until we are compelled to think ill of him; and even when we are compelled to pass censure upon him, to do it as of necessity, rather than of choice; regarding the interests of Religion, and the good of others, not indulging a vindictive or a selfish triumph. For Charity "seeketh not her own, vaunteth not "itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave "itself unseemly." It "is not easily pro-"voked," even by what *deserves* chastisement: and more especially it is tender of the failings of the just and good, which it will never unnecessarily expose to public view.

If more were necessary on this subject, it would easily admit of additional illustration by reference to the conduct of our Lord and his Apostles.

When our Lord restored the blind man to

sight, he reproved his followers for supposing that the man, or his parents, were sinners, because he had been born blind. On another occasion, he animadverted upon the Jews for their perverse and censorious opinions of himself and John the Baptist. At another time, he repelled their unjust reflections upon him for eating with publicans and sinners, and for the many good deeds which they misconstrued as violations of the Sabbath. In all these instances he appeared as the advocate of that Charity which "thinketh no evil," and which abhors an unwarrantable imputation of sinister motives. Yet we find that he spared not the impenitent and incorrigible Jews, when their iniquities made them ripe for judgment, and when it became necessary to warn his disciples not to be misled by their example. By severe expostulations, reproofs, and denunciations, he exposed their hypocrisy and perverseness. The Apostles, in after-times, pursued a similar line of conduct; exercising, in various instances, the most extensive candour and forbearance; yet never yielding to the adversaries of the Faith, nor temporising with those who endeavoured to draw men aside from their doctrines and precepts.

These examples it becomes us to imitate,

and not suffer ourselves, under false notions of Liberality, to "fall from our own stead-"fastness." The vindication, however, of Truth and Virtue, and the honest assertion of our own firm persuasions on every point that affects the characters of others, may be conducted without any breach of Charity, or any just cause of offence. Herein consists the great excellence of the Apostolical injunctions on this head, that they neither require any sacrifice of integrity, nor do they afford any pretext for indulging an acrimonious or malevolent spirit. None can exercise *Christian Charity*, according to the *Scriptural* acceptation of the term, without avoiding *both* these extremes;—without being careful not to make shipwreck of their Faith or Conscience, and at the same time "putting away "all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and cla-"mour, and evil-speaking, with all malice."

When that which is recommended to us under the less distinct and definite appellation of *Liberality of Sentiment*, shall thus approve itself to our acceptance, we may then, and not till then, consent to acknowledge it as a Christian Virtue; or, rather, we may then identify it with that genuine Charity, "which is the very bond of peace and of all "virtues." In the meanwhile, it will be our

duty and our interest to beware that we "fol-
"low not a multitude to do evil;" bearing in mind two very comprehensive admonitions of our Lord and of his chosen Apostle St. Paul, which comprise the sum and substance of all that relates to the subject:—"Be ye wise as "Serpents, and harmless as Doves;"—"In "Malice be ye Children, but in Understand-
"ing be Men."

SERMON XI.

LUKE xiii. 23, 24.

Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

THERE is a general propensity in the human mind to be inquisitive respecting matters above the reach of its apprehension; more especially in the investigation of religious subjects. Of this a remarkable instance is recorded in the words of the text. Our blessed Lord, after exhorting his hearers to Repentance, reproving the perverseness of the Jews in cavilling at his Miracles, and foretelling the rapid and irresistible progress of the Gospel, notwithstanding their endeavours to effect its overthrow, was accosted by one of his followers, who, instead of being moved to a serious application of these discourses to his own spiritual improvement, sought to gratify a vain and presumptuous curiosity respecting the *number* of those whom God had ordained

to Salvation:—"Lord," says he, "are there "*few* that be saved?"

Possibly this question was put with a view to draw from our Lord a more explicit declaration respecting the extent of his Religion; whether it was to embrace all mankind, or the Jews only, who were accustomed to consider themselves exclusively entitled to the favour of God. Or it might be suggested by an apprehension of the great difficulty of complying with those conditions on which the offer of Salvation through the Gospel was tendered to mankind. Or, perhaps, it originated in a mere fondness for idle and fruitless speculations, such as serve only to bewilder the understanding, and turn the thoughts aside from matters of higher moment. Be that as it may, neither to the question itself, nor to the person who proposed it, does it appear that our Lord vouchsafed a direct answer. But "he said unto "*them*," (addressing his discourse to the disciples in general, and not to this inquirer in particular,) "Strive to enter in at the strait "gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek "to enter in, and shall not be able."

From our Lord's conduct on this occasion, we are led to infer that he considered the question to be an unnecessary and improper

subject of inquiry. His reply intimates that it is one of those "secret things" which "be-"long unto the Lord our God," and such as it does not concern us to know; since, whatever may be foreseen or predetermined by infinite Wisdom respecting it, each person's individual Salvation will still depend on his "striving to enter in at the strait gate;" and those who "seek," or expect, "to enter in" without so doing, will ultimately fail of success.

Nevertheless, few subjects have been more fruitful of contention than those which relate, in the first place, to the *Divine Decrees* respecting the Salvation of mankind; and, in the next place, to the extent and operation of the *Divine Grace*, by which that Salvation is effected: the first involving the *Universality* of the Christian Redemption; the second, its *Efficacy:* points, unquestionably of fundamental importance; so important, indeed, that a doubt on either may be fatal to our peace of mind, unless we be content to build our hopes on imaginary revelations made for our own personal conviction, or on a vague and presumptuous confidence in our own personal deserts.

In the present Discourse I shall confine myself to the former of these questions, that

which relates to the *Universality* of the Christian Redemption, whether the offer of Salvation is limited in its extent, so as to preclude any who are desirous of obtaining it from participating in its effects?

The words of the text seem, by implication at least, to decide this question. "*Strive*," says our Lord, "to enter in at the strait "gate;" an admonition, which were surely nugatory, if any to whom it is addressed were already precluded from entering in, by a positive Decree of the Almighty. For, who need strive for that, which, if God have already decreed it, he must be sure to obtain, whether he strive or not; and which, if God have decreed otherwise, his utmost efforts to obtain must fail of success? Are we not here, then, by implication at least, clearly taught, that, in some respect or other, every man's personal Salvation depends upon his own endeavours?

A similar inference may be drawn from our blessed Saviour's admonition, "Not every "one that calleth me, *Lord*, *Lord*, shall enter "into the kingdom of heaven, but he that "doeth the will of my Father which is in "heaven;" also from St. Paul's exhortation, "Work out your own Salvation with fear and "trembling;" from St. Peter's, "Be diligent

"that ye may be found of Him in peace, "without spot, and blameless;" and from St. John's, "Let no man deceive you: he that "doeth righteousness is righteous, even as "He is righteous: he that committeth sin, is "of the Devil." These plain instructions it seems hardly possible to reconcile with any scheme of Salvation founded upon irrespective and unconditional Decrees.

Equally difficult is it to reconcile such a scheme with the declarations of Holy Writ, that God is "not willing that any should "perish, but that *all* should come to repent-"ance;" that he would "have *all* men to be "saved, and to come to the knowledge of the "truth;" and that he "gave himself a ran-"som for *all*." These enlarged and comprehensive views of the Christian Dispensation ill accord with the opinions of those who would restrict the great work of Redemption to a chosen *few*, for whose exclusive benefit they conceive it to have been originally pre-ordained.

Were we to concede, however, that there are some passages of Scripture, which, when detached from their context, and abstractedly considered, appear to convey a meaning favourable to such opinions; yet this will not suffice to do away the more unambiguous and

positive declarations of Holy Writ. According to the known rules of interpretation, Scripture must be explained by Scripture; and no *particular* hypothesis may be set up against the *general* tenor of the Sacred Writings. Should we meet, therefore, with texts of doubtful meaning, or capable of some variety of construction, it will always be safer to expound them in conformity with the plainer and more undisputed doctrines of the Bible, than to take them in a sense which may be found at variance with those doctrines.

Now, with respect to the texts most usually brought forward in support of the opinions in question, they are chiefly taken from certain passages of St. Paul's Epistles, in which he is treating of a very different subject; a subject altogether peculiar in its kind, and not necessarily, if at all, connected with this dispute. St. Paul was the great advocate of the Gentiles, against the narrow prejudices of the Jewish converts: and in arguing to prove that the former were equally entitled with the latter to the privileges of the Gospel, he urges that the special favour shewn to the Jewish nation, in selecting them as God's *peculiar people*, was an act of *free Grace*, a distinction wholly unmerited on their part,

and bestowed upon them, not for their own sakes, but as depositaries of the promised blessing intended for the benefit of all mankind. In expatiating on this point, he frequently animadverts on the *unworthiness* of these chosen vessels of honour, as they deemed themselves to be; and ascribes their Election to this distinguished favour solely to the secret and predetermined counsels of the Almighty. Whence he draws the conclusion, that they who were invested with such privileges had no cause of boasting in the preference given them, but rather of fear lest their spiritual improvement should not be found correspondent with the preeminent advantages they enjoyed.

Such is the purport of a considerable portion of that Epistle to the Romans, which has been thought to supply the most ample materials for supporting the theory of particular Redemption. In addition to which, the Apostle largely descants on the general unworthiness and corruption of the *whole human race*, in order to prove that *Salvation* is the *free gift* of God to *every one* to whom it is offered, and not to be claimed as of right, or as a debt, by any of the sons of men. "*All*," says he, "*have sinned, and come short* "*of the glory of God; being justified freely*

"*by his Grace, through the Redemption that*
"*is in Christ Jesus.*"

But in this train of argument, what is there to warrant the opinion that this free gift is bestowed *unconditionally*, without respect to the qualifications of the individuals; or that there is any Divine *Decree*, ordaining particular persons to Eternal Life, and making it impossible for any but them to escape perdition?

This dangerous notion has, indeed, little foundation but in the presumptuous reasonings of men upon those attributes of the Godhead, of which it is impossible for us to form full and adequate conceptions. Arguing from the irresistible *Power* and the infinite *Knowledge* of the Supreme Being, that every thing which takes place, in the moral or natural world, must of necessity be the result of HIS *sovereign will and pleasure;* it is hence rashly inferred, that man is a mere *machine* in the hands of his Creator, and that whatever be eventually his destiny, whether of happiness or misery, is to be ascribed to GOD as the *predisposing Cause:* so that not only are Grace and Salvation the *free gifts* of God, but (as it is contended) these gifts, issuing from HIM who is *Divine* and *Omnipotent*, cannot possibly *fail* of their effect, by any

perversion or neglect on the part of the recipients. Consequently, the final doom of every man must have been *predetermined* by the Giver of these blessings, who dispenses or withholds them, according as it is the purpose of his inscrutable counsels to bring particular persons to Salvation, or to abandon them to inevitable perdition.

These tremendous speculations are not of recent origin, nor are they, indeed, altogether confined to the *Christian* world. *Jews*, *Turks*, *Heathens*, and *Infidels*, have been divided and subdivided into sects and parties among themselves, holding divers tenets respecting the mode of reconciling the Foreknowledge and Omnipotence of God with the free-agency and moral responsibility of man. As far as mere human reasoning can avail, the research, perhaps, will ever be fruitless and unsatisfactory. But, through faith in God's word, the problem may so far be solved, as to set our minds at ease: and the doctrine of Election and Predestination, as propounded in Scripture, will be found to admit of such an interpretation as not to be repulsive to those moral feelings, which are implanted in us as our continual safeguard against practical errors.

That God, whose Knowledge is infinite,

and to whom the past, present, and future, are all equally discernible, must have *known*, from the beginning, who would, and who would not, be saved, (i. e. who would believe and obey the Gospel, and who would not do so,) is not to be disputed. But this knowledge must nevertheless be conceived to have reference to their respective conduct; i. e. to their use or abuse of the means provided for their Salvation. "Whom he did *foreknow*," says St. Paul, "he also did *predestinate*. More-
"over, whom he did predestinate, them he
"also *called:* and whom he called, them he
"also *justified:* and whom he justified, them
"he also *glorified*." Here the Foreknowledge of God is made the foundation of all the subsequent results. The Predestination, Calling, and Justification of Believers, are the consequences of those good dispositions, and that right use of the opportunities vouchsafed to them, which God foresaw and foreknew would distinguish these persons from others; and therefore such persons are elsewhere said by St. Paul to be "predestinated unto the adop-
"tion of children, by Jesus Christ, to him-
"self, according to the good pleasure of his
"will; to the praise of the glory of his grace." This seems to be the only construction that can render expressions of this kind consistent

with the numberless intimations in Holy Writ, respecting men's entire *freedom of will*, and their capability of *accepting* or *rejecting* the proffered blessing. It is the language of God to his people: "I call heaven and earth "to record this day against you, that I have "set before you life and death, blessing and "cursing: therefore choose life." And it was our Lord's complaint to the unbelieving Jews, "Ye *will* not come unto me, that ye may have "life."

The sum of these observations may be comprised in few words. The Almighty has seen fit to endow men with sundry *natural* gifts and talents. He bestows also, upon all who are admitted into *Covenant* with him, the manifold gifts of *Grace;* by which they may be both *disposed* and *enabled* to perform his will. *Foreseeing* what *use* will individually be made of these benefits, he ordains that they who rightly apply them shall be admitted into his kingdom in heaven, and that they who perversely abuse them shall fall into just condemnation. The *number*, therefore, of those who shall be saved (though doubtless it is, and cannot but be, known to an Omniscient God) depends still upon *their own conduct;* and if any fail of obtaining Eternal Life, the failure is to be attributed

to themselves. For, the Decrees of the Almighty, respecting the Salvation of individual persons, result from the perfect *Knowledge* he possesses, how they will respectively act under his dispensations. So that, in propriety of speech, we ought not to say that any man is Elect or Reprobate, *because* God hath *decreed* that he *shall be so;* but, that one is Elect, or received into favour, and another is Reprobate, or cast out of his favour, because God hath decreed that such *shall be the reward or condemnation of each*, as the just *recompense* of their respective *conduct*.

The doctrine of the *Church of England*, touching these disputed points, may here be brought to illustrate what has been stated as the *Scriptural* view of the subject.

In her 17th Article, our Church thus declares her sentiments: "Predestination to "Life is the everlasting purpose of God, "whereby, before the foundations of the "world were laid, he hath constantly de-"creed, by his counsel, secret to us, to deli-"ver from curse and damnation those whom "he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, "and to bring them by Christ to everlast-"ing Salvation, as vessels made to honour. "Wherefore, they which be endued with so "excellent a benefit of God, be called, ac-

"cording to God's purpose, by his Spirit work-
"ing in due season: they, through grace, obey
"the calling: they be justified freely: they
"be made sons of God, by adoption: they be
"made like the image of his only-begotten
"Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in
"good works: and at length, by God's mercy,
"they attain to everlasting felicity."

This description of the persons whom it was the everlasting purpose of God to bless with Eternal Life, implies, that it was from a foreknowledge of their personal improvement under the means of Grace and Salvation, that they were preordained to everlasting felicity. All who believe and are baptized into the Christian Faith are said to be "*chosen* in "Christ out of mankind," and "brought to "Salvation by Christ." It is the privilege of these, to be endued with God's Holy Spirit, helping their infirmities, encouraging and supporting them in their Christian course, perfecting their good dispositions, and enabling them thus to persevere till they attain to the consummation of joy and felicity. That this is the work of God's Holy Spirit, aiding and cooperating with them on whom it is bestowed, is the constant declaration of Scripture: and the Predestination here spoken of evidently has reference to the *use*

that is made of these benefits. So that nothing like absolute or unconditional Decrees can fairly be inferred from these expressions.

The Article goes on to represent this "*godly* consideration of Predestination and "our Election in Christ," to be "full of "sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable *comfort* to "*godly* persons, and such as feel in them-"selves the Spirit of Christ mortifying the "flesh and the earthly members, and draw-"ing up the mind to high and heavenly "things; as well because it doth greatly "establish and confirm their *faith* of eternal "Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as "because it doth fervently kindle their *love* "towards God."

This passage sets forth, in lively terms, the *effect* which the doctrine of Election, when rightly understood, produces in the hearts and minds of faithful Christians. Having solid grounds of assurance that the Spirit of Christ dwells in them, witnessed by the good *fruits* which it brings forth, and by their earnest desire to subdue *all* corrupt propensities, they derive from that assurance the highest degree of encouragement and satisfaction. And though this does not lead them presumptuously to imagine, that they are in a state of *perfection*, from which they *cannot*

fall away; yet, so long as they have this *evidence* of their continuing in favour with God, it must, of necessity, "greatly establish and "confirm their faith of Eternal Salvation."

But (the Article further observes) "for cu-"rious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit "of Christ, to have continually before their "eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, "is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the "Devil doth thrust them either into despera-"tion, or into wretchlessness of most unclean "living, no less perilous than desperation."

This applies to those, who either lead such lives as are inconsistent with their Christian profession, or who vainly imagine that some *other* evidence is necessary of God's Spirit dwelling in them, than the good *fruits* which it produces. And WHO are these persons? They are either *carnal* persons, abusing God's grace, and grieving his Holy Spirit, by their careless and licentious conduct; or they are *curious* persons, attempting to dive into the mysterious operations of the Holy Spirit, and the nature of the Divine Decrees: whence they are led to regard their want of that comfort and assurance, which others feel, as a token that they are absolutely *rejected* of God, and can have no share in the mercies of Redemption:—a notion, which will hardly

fail to plunge them into despair, and to confirm them in their evil habits.

Against such fatal *perversion* of the doctrine, the Article concludes with this salutary admonition:—"Furthermore, we must re-"ceive God's *promises* in such wise as they "be *generally* set forth to us in Holy Scrip-"ture: and, in our *doings*, that *Will of God* "is to be followed, which we have expressly "*declared* unto us in the *Word of God*."

This practical instruction, deducible from the whole, might, if duly attended to, greatly allay the heat of controversy on these difficult points, and prevent many from becoming victims of enthusiastic delusion. The *promises* of God are always to be understood in a sense consistent with that *practical Holiness*, "without which no man shall see the "Lord." The *threatenings* of God are to be interpreted as extending only to *wilful* disobedience, impenitency, or unbelief. And, in all our *doings*, that *Will of God* is to be followed, which is declared to us in the *Word of God*. Thus does our Church guard against the supposition of God's having ordained men to Salvation or Reprobation, by any *absolute* Decrees: pointing out what conduct is necessary on our part to entitle us to the promises of Salvation; and cautioning us against

despair or impenitency through a groundless apprehension of being doomed to a state of inevitable perdition.

Having thus cleared the first great point, by endeavouring to shew that "the kingdom "of heaven is opened to *all* believers," and that the invitation to enter in is general and unlimited; the conclusion is, that, whether the number of those who shall finally be saved, be many or few, the *Divine* Justice and Goodness will stand free from all exceptions; and upon *man* only will alight the blame of the forfeiture of the Blessing. And this leads to the other great points, reserved for future consideration, respecting the extent and operation of that *Divine Grace*, by which our Salvation is to be effected: or, in other words, *how* we are to *strive* for this Blessing; and whence it comes to pass, that any who may be said to "*seek*" the Way of Life, shall yet ultimately fail of success.

The great lesson to be learned from the *present* discussion, is, that we give no encouragement to a fondness for speculation on dark and inscrutable subjects of Religion. Whatever is *necessary* to be known in Theology, is revealed with sufficient clearness to satisfy every modest and sober inquirer after Truth. The fundamental articles of Faith

and Practice are marked so strongly and so clearly, as to be discernible by almost every eye. Beyond these, it is generally hazardous to explore. The depths of the Divine counsels, and the agency of the Divine attributes, in disposing and conducting an infinite series of events from the beginning to the end of time, are not fit subjects for human disputation. Rather ought we to fall prostrate before the throne of the Almighty, and say, with the Apostle, "O! the depth of the "riches both of the wisdom and knowledge "of God! how unsearchable are his judg-"ments, and his ways past finding out!"

But "*vain man would be wise!*" He is eager to search into mysteries; and when he is puffed up with a conceit of having penetrated, farther than others can do, into subjects of this description, spiritual pride too frequently accompanies his pursuits, to the destruction of those dispositions which are among the purest ornaments of the Christian character. For, who are so likely to disregard the injunction, "Be not high-minded, "but fear," as they who persuade themselves that they are *special* favourites of Heaven, preordained to Everlasting Life? Or who so likely as they are, to think scorn of others, and to regard all who do not arrogate to

themselves the same pretensions, as scarcely better than Heathens or Infidels, or as outcasts from God? And have we not continual cause to lament these effects of mistaken zeal, so irreconcilable with the spirit of that merciful Saviour, who would have all men to come unto him that they may have Life, and who hath nowhere passed sentence against any who faithfully strive to fulfil the terms of the Gospel Covenant?

The remedy against such evils, is, to beware that we judge not either ourselves or others by any criterion unwarranted by the general tenor of Holy Writ; and to be assured, that whatever is *practically pernicious* must be *theoretically wrong*. We have the authority of our Lord himself, that "a *good* "tree cannot bring forth *evil* fruit; neither "can a *corrupt* tree bring forth *good* fruit." "Wherefore, by their *fruits* ye shall know "them." Every Doctrine, every article of Faith, must be able to abide this test. And it is our duty so to interpret all the truths of Scripture, that they may neither be at variance with each other, nor be made to foster unchristian practice or unchristian dispositions. "For in Christ Jesus neither circum-"cision availeth any thing, nor uncircum-

"cision, but *a new creature*," a spirit conformed to that of Christ himself. "And as "many as walk according to *this* rule, peace "be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel "of God."

SERMON XII.

LUKE xiii. 23, 24.

Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

IN a former Discourse on this passage of Scripture, it was observed, that the admonition here given by our blessed Saviour, in reply to the question proposed to him, appeared to be intended to discourage unprofitable inquiries into the Divine counsels, respecting the Salvation of particular persons; and to direct the attention of his followers to the momentous practical concern in which every individual has a special interest, that of "working out his own Salvation with fear "and trembling," and "giving all diligence "to make his calling and election sure." Occasion was thence taken to shew, from this and other texts of Scripture, and from the general tenor of the Christian Dispensation, that there is no authority for supposing that

the Redemption through Christ is limited to particular individuals, by any antecedent and absolute Decrees of the Almighty; or that the Way of Life is in effect closed against others, so that to none but *them* are vouchsafed sufficient means of Grace and Salvation. This point it seemed necessary to consider as a previous matter of inquiry; because, until it can be shewn to every man that the Way to Eternal Happiness is open to *him*, as well as to *others*, no effectual inducement can be proposed to him for striving to obtain it.

Admitting, then, the conclusion to which we have already arrived, that, whether the number of the Elect be many or few, the *Divine* Justice and Goodness will stand free from all exceptions, and upon *man* only will alight the blame of the forfeiture of the Blessing; we may now proceed to the other main branch of our inquiry, *how* we are to *strive* for this Blessing, and whence it comes to pass, that any who *seek* it, shall ultimately fail of success.

This question involves the several difficulties respecting man's natural inability to work out his Salvation, and the extent and operation of that *Divine Grace*, which is necessary to make his efforts effectual; difficulties, rendered almost as perplexing, by the

subtleties of controversialists, as those which relate to the *Divine Decrees.*

The Scriptures declare that we were "conceived and born in sin," and are by nature "children of wrath." This our corrupt state is (as our 9th Article expresses it) "naturally ingendered of the offspring of Adam; "whereby man is very far gone from original "righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil." They who are admitted into the Christian Covenant, as well as they who enjoy not that benefit, have to contend with this natural and hereditary evil.

Many differences of opinion have been entertained respecting the *extent* of this corruption, and the possibility of entirely subduing it. Some maintain, that every moral and intellectual faculty in the posterity of Adam is, in consequence of his Fall, so totally depraved, as to be naturally incapable of any act of virtue, or any love of goodness. Others, on the contrary, assert, that there is no taint whatever inherent in our nature, Sin being merely the result of habit, of imitation, and of the wilful neglect or perversion of those faculties which *naturally* would incline us to what is right and good. The truth may, perhaps, be found betwixt both extremes. For while we admit (as the Scrip-

tures manifestly require us to do) that some taint has been received from our first parents, which has so far vitiated our faculties, as to make us generally *prone to evil;* there seems to be no reason for denying that a *natural power* still exists within us of discerning between right and wrong, and also some *natural inclination* to reject the evil, and approve the good. It is sufficient if we acknowledge, that there is within us such a *preponderating* bias towards evil, that we never could become *free from sin*, nor, consequently, fit objects of the *Divine favour*, by our own unassisted efforts. The necessity of God's Grace, and the hopeless state of man without the Redemption provided for him in the Gospel, are thus fully recognized and confirmed: nor are we concerned to give a more explicit answer to the many subtle questions with which adepts in metaphysical science may perplex the subject.

Our Church, with her wonted discretion, steers this middle course. She speaks of man, in his fallen state, as "*very far gone from*" that "*original righteousness*" in which he was created, and incapable in himself of doing "works pleasant and acceptable to God." But she affirms nothing more than this, respecting the *extent* of the corruption. She

moreover adopts the language of St. Paul, that "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and "the spirit against the flesh." But these expressions the Apostle himself expounds, by saying, that, while we delight in the "*Law of* "*God* after the *inward* man," we find "*an-* "*other* law in our *members*, warring against "the law of our *minds*, and bringing it into "captivity to the *law of sin*." In which representation of the natural man, it is clearly implied, that his hereditary corruption is not so *total*, but that there is still a *conflict* within him between the love of good and the propensity to evil; which, though not sufficient to enable him always to stand upright, yet discovers some remaining tokens of that image of God in which he was at first created.

It can hardly, however, be denied, that our wills and affections, our appetites and passions, are naturally *reluctant* to submit to discipline, and present continual obstacles to our progress in Christian virtue. And when, to this natural *indisposition* to what is good, are added the power of *evil habits*, the influence of *bad example*, the tendency even of the common occupations of life to withdraw our attention from spiritual concerns, and the numberless snares and temptations to evil with which we are every where surrounded;

we cannot but perceive that difficulties, above the natural strength of man, are to be encountered, in following the strait path which leadeth unto Life. The question is, then, how are these to be surmounted?

St. Paul's answer to this question is short and full:—"*Our sufficiency is of God.*" "It "is God which worketh in you, both to will "and to do of his good pleasure." "The "condition of man after the Fall of Adam" (says our 10th Article) "is such, that he can-"not turn and prepare himself, by his own "*natural* strength and good works, to Faith, "and calling upon God: wherefore we have "no power to do good works pleasant and "acceptable to God, *without the Grace of God* "by Christ *preventing* us, that we may have "a good-will, and *working with us*, when "we have that good-will." *Without* this, we could effectually do nothing. *With* this, if we fail in fulfilling the conditions required, our condemnation will be just. "God work-"eth in us, both to will and to do:" and, being thus assisted, *we* are required to work also. God giveth an increase of strength and power and inclination: and man is bound to use those gifts for the purposes for which they were bestowed.

This sufficiently proves, that all reliance

upon *merit* of our own, as the ground of our *Justification* before God, is completely excluded. Whatever we do that may render us acceptable in the sight of God, we have received the ability from God: and to God be given the glory. Nay, more:—we still, notwithstanding the help of God's grace, "in "many things offend all:" for "the *infection* "of our corrupt nature doth remain even in "them that are *regenerated*." Of this, every Christian, not puffed up with false wisdom, or with spiritual conceit, cannot but be sensible. And although "there is now no *con-* "*demnation* to them which are in Christ "Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but "after the Spirit;" yet it is solely by the *free gift* of Redemption in our blessed Saviour, that this condemnation is taken off, and not by any *meritorious* obedience that we, even as "children of Grace," are enabled to perform.

These points being cleared, we shall have little difficulty in ascertaining what is necessary on our part to the attainment of the high prize that is set before us.

First, then, all our hopes and expectations as Christians are founded on *Faith;* on a full persuasion and conviction that God hath reconciled us to himself by his Son; that he

vouchsafes us the help of his Holy Spirit; and that these mercies are bestowed for the purpose of bringing us to Everlasting Life. This Faith is the main spring of action. It invigorates the resolution; gives spirit, alacrity, cheerfulness; and encourages us, in the work we have to do, with an assurance that our labour shall not be in vain.

Where this Faith is strong and active, it will lead to habitual supplications at the *Throne of Grace*, "for help in time of need." For, though God would have all men to be saved, yet he commands that they should *come to him*, that they may have Life. He enjoins that they should seek of HIM the promised blessing; and not presume on their own right, or their own ability, to obtain it. "*Ask*, and ye shall have: *seek*, and ye shall "find: *knock*, and it shall be opened unto "you." This is the tenor of the promise: and as well might we expect to reap where we have not sown, or to gather where we have not strawed, as to be put in possession of the help we stand in need of, without complying with these requisitions. To neglect these, is wilfully to deprive ourselves of the special privileges of the Christian Covenant; and, thus far, to reduce ourselves to a level with unbelievers. This, therefore, cannot be

entering in at "the *strait* gate;" but is attempting to gain our object by ways of our own devising, tending we know not whither, and holding out no assurance of success.

But, secondly, neither will this Faith, nor these Divine helps, avail us, without our own diligent cooperation. This our Church distinctly points out, in saying, that the Grace of God "*worketh with* us," after it has wrought in us a good Will. This corresponds, too, with the declarations of Scripture, that we "shall be judged according to our *works*," and that "Faith without *works* is dead:" and again, that the *Faith* which justifies and saves us, is that which "worketh by *Love*." *Prayer*, without this, defeats its own purpose: for, why do we pray for God's help, but that we may be enabled to *do* what he will approve and accept? The *Sacraments*, if unproductive of the works of Piety and Charity, degenerate into lifeless and unprofitable ceremonies. The *Holy Scriptures* themselves become as a dead letter, to those who read them with no intent to carry their instructions into practical effect. For, the design of all these is, that we should "bring forth *fruits* "meet for Repentance," that we should "*cease* "*to do evil*," and "*learn to do well*."

Some, however, lest they should seem to

ascribe any degree of *merit* to human exertions, in thus *cooperating* with the Divine aid, contend, that it is the *necessary* effect of Faith to produce these good works; and that no *concurrent* Will, or *coactive* Power, on the part of man, is requisite to that end. They allege, that *Faith* is the *tree*, and *Obedience* the *fruit;* that if the tree be lively and vigorous, it will bear fruit accordingly: and that where there is saving and justifying Faith, the same Divine Grace which *implanted* it will not fail to make it *productive* of whatever is necessary to render it meet for God's acceptance.

If this were a full and correct view of the subject, we should have nothing to do but to persuade ourselves that we have a saving Faith, and all the rest would follow as a matter of course: a persuasion, which multitudes are ready to cherish, without much inquiry whether it rests on a firm foundation. But why, in this case, are we enjoined to "add to our Faith, *Virtue?*" Why are we commanded to "run," to "fight," to "wrestle," to "give diligence?"—terms, denoting great personal efforts on our part, and teaching us that our best faculties must be strenuously employed in God's service, if we would obtain the promised reward? Consider also our

Lord's parable of the *Barren Fig-tree;* and see how the metaphor of the Tree and the Fruit is *there* applied. The owner of the Fig-tree, it is said, "sought fruit thereon, but "found none." Yet the Tree was planted by the Lord of the Vineyard: it was neither a thorn, nor a thistle, but a true Fig-tree: and it is stated, that the dresser of the Vineyard, year after year, applied to it the necessary means of culture and improvement. Notwithstanding this, it proved to be a *barren* Tree; and, as such, it was sentenced to be cut down. What could this be designed to teach us, but that *Faith itself,* though planted in Christ's own Vineyard, and possessing all the means of spiritual growth and nourishment that can be administered, may yet be *unproductive,* and, after all, "hewn "down, and cast into the fire?"

Hence, then, we may discover, in the last place, whence it comes to pass, that many who "*seek*" to enter into Life, "shall not be "*able?*"

This expression cannot, for the reasons already given, be understood to import, that any who are *sincerely desirous* of Salvation, and who *use the proper means to obtain it,* shall fail in their endeavours. It can only mean, that many, who fondly persuade them-

selves that they are in the right way, will, either because they have formed wrong notions of Religion, or because they are careless and lukewarm in the practice of it, be at last disappointed in their expectations. It is they who "*strive*," not they who "*seek*" only, who are encouraged with the assurance of reward.

There is, in most men, some propensity to be religious, and a readiness to adopt some scheme of Faith or Practice, by which they may set their minds at ease. But when this propensity is not duly regulated by the rule of *God's word*, it exhibits itself, not unfrequently, in strange *anomalies*, as various as the tempers and dispositions in which they originate.

It is possible, for instance, to have abundance of *zeal* for the Truth, without much solicitude respecting its *practical* effects: and men are liable to deceive themselves, by mistaking their adherence to *orthodox* opinions, and their strenuous opposition to *heresy* and *infidelity*, for the sum total of Christian *Piety and Virtue*. Now, though to "be zealously "affected in a good thing" is, in the Apostle's estimation, a disposition much to be commended; yet the Religion that goes no *farther* than this, stops short of the main object that is set before it. Religion is a *personal*,

as well as a *general* concern: and although the polemic, who successfully maintains the Faith against its adversaries, and endeavours to reclaim those who are "carried about with "divers and strange doctrines," deserves well of the community, and may be regarded as an instrument, in the hand of God, for good to *others;* yet we dare not say that this shall avail to *his own* Salvation, if the tenor of his life correspond not with the doctrine he upholds. What our Lord said of prophets and of workers of miracles in his times, whose wicked deeds brought reproach on their profession, is no less applicable to mere *zealots* in the cause of Truth: "Many will say to "me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not "prophesied in thy name? and in thy name "have cast out devils? and in thy name done "many wonderful works? And then will I "profess unto them, I never knew you: de-"part from me, ye that work iniquity."

Similar observations apply to those who aim at being more *spiritualized* than others; and who place their dependence upon strong *internal feelings*, subject to no test or proof but their own imaginations. This is what many dignify by the title of *vital* and *experimental* Religion, in contradistinction to that which deems *external practice* necessary to

the proof of *internal and saving Faith.* Hence we meet with instances of what is called *Godliness*, without *Virtue;* and of pretenders to *Sanctity*, who do not always appear equally observant of *Moral Purity.* Nay, we hear of certain teachers of so extravagant a cast, as to profess almost a kind of horror of what is commonly called *a good life*, as if it must unavoidably lead to *pride* and *self-sufficiency;* and who regard even sins of the deepest dye as better adapted to bring men to Christ, (as the phrase is,) than the ordinary course of an inoffensive and virtuous conduct. But how this is to be reconciled with the numberless Scriptural precepts on every branch of our duty to God and man, it seems difficult, if not impossible, to explain. For what will it avail, to say, that the Holy Ghost has personally *convinced* them of sin; or to descant on the love of God to sinners, and dwell with raptures on the name of Jesus; or to affirm that Jesus Christ hath *assured* them of their Salvation; if they are not solicitous to prove their love of God, by *keeping his commandments?*

Different, again, from these, yet widely deviating from the strait way pointed out to them in Holy Writ, are the mere *Formalists* in Religion; they who imagine that a

punctilious observance of outward, ceremonial worship, comprises all that is essential to Christianity. With such persons, a persuasion seems to be entertained, that the *mere act* of devotional services (the *opus operatum*, as the Schoolmen were wont to call it) will procure the Grace of God, and effectually work their salvation. This doctrine has very generally pervaded the Romish Church: and, erroneous as it is acknowledged to be by Protestants in general, it lurks probably in the minds of some who are scarcely sensible of its influence. Its prevalence may at all times be suspected, where we see no good *practically* resulting from scrupulous exactness in these particulars. This was the error for which our Lord severely reproved the Jewish Scribes and Pharisees; who, while they neglected "the weightier matters of the "Law, judgment, mercy, and faith," "outwardly appeared righteous unto men," by their strict observance of its ritual injunctions; "having," as St. Paul said of them, "a "*form* of godliness, but denying the *power* "thereof."

On the other hand, among professed Religionists, many "seek" to enter into Life by a still different course: altogether neglecting *external* ordinances; placing no reliance what-

ever on these means of obtaining the promised aid of *God's Holy Spirit;* but trusting solely to their own natural strength and ability, to sustain them in the conflict with their spiritual enemies. These are they who expect to be saved by their *moral worth;* who can see no good to be derived from those Ordinances which God hath enjoined for their spiritual improvement; but trust for acceptance to the goodness of their hearts, and the rectitude of their natural dispositions.

Now, although it be most true, that there can be no true Godliness without Morality, (for the fruits of the Spirit enumerated by St. Paul are *moral virtues;* and St. Peter exhorts us to "add to our Faith, Virtue;" and God himself ordained the Moral Law,) yet to separate Morality from Godliness, is to deprive it of its main support, and to undermine its strongest foundation. For it will be difficult to prove, that Virtue itself hath any certain fixed principles, independent of *the Will of God;* or any claim to recompense, but as an act of *Obedience to God.* Christian Virtue, at least, must be connected with Christian Faith. And the hope of obtaining acceptance without that Faith, is (to say the least of it) unwarranted by any authoritative declaration of the Word of God.

Thus we see how it may happen that many who "seek to enter into Life, shall not be "able." They may mistake their way to it; or they may make imperfect efforts to arrive at it. The Way of Life, though plain and direct, is sometimes rugged and difficult: and many are disposed to imagine that it may be made smoother and easier than God hath declared it to be. To the bent, therefore, of his own natural inclination, every one tries, more or less, to adapt the Gospel system. If he be of an ardent and volatile disposition, he may too readily catch at the airy dreams of Fanaticism, by which he expects to mount to heaven, without any impediment from the grosser passions of his nature. If he be cold and inert, he will perceive it to be much easier to confine himself to the *forms* of Godliness, than to exemplify the *spirit* and *power* of it, in a life of active Virtue. If he be fond of deep research and subtle disputation, the *theory* of Religion may gain his whole attention; and while zealous for the Truth, and tenacious of his Creed, he will probably be less solicitous respecting its practical effects. If, on the other hand, he be slow of belief, full of the wisdom of this world, and confident in his own strength, he will be tempted to hold in disesteem the

humiliating truths of the Gospel, and to frame to himself other notions of the Deity, better adapted to his own lofty conceits. These are the precarious foundations on which men too often build their hopes, when they "forsake "the fountain of living waters, and hew them "out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold "no water."

But it is not so with them who faithfully "*strive* to enter in at *the strait gate*." Convinced by that injunction, that the way of life is open and accessible to all who live under the Gospel Dispensation; they are sensible that it is no less their interest than their duty to pursue it in the direct track which our Lord hath pointed out. They will not seek it in by-paths of their own making; nor be diverted from their pursuit, by any specious projects of human invention. They will neither sacrifice *faith* to *virtue*, nor *virtue* to *faith:* they will not let *zeal* exterminate *charity*, nor *charity* extinguish *zeal:* they will not, in scaling the heights of *heaven*, forget that they are "sojourners here on *earth:*" they will "turn neither to the right hand, "nor to the left;" but "restrain their feet "from evil." Neither will they be dismayed by the difficulties and obstacles, which they are forewarned to expect in their Christian

course: but will acquit themselves in their *spiritual* calling, as the children of this world are wont to act in *temporal* concerns. Though sometimes defeated, they will still go on; though disappointed, they will repeat the endeavour; though they miss their aim at one time, they will seek it the more earnestly and carefully at another. And thus they will strive, from the assurance that they "can do "all things through Christ who strengtheneth "them," and that consequently "their labour "shall not be in vain."

Instead, then, of disquieting ourselves with vain inquiries into the hidden counsels of God, or seeking other ways to Life than that to which the Sacred Word of Truth directs us; it behoves us to rest in the persuasion that "the Judge of all the Earth will do "right," and that whatever He hath declared, whether of promise or of threatening, he will assuredly make good. Through his Blessed Son he hath opened to us the way of Salvation. His Power, his Wisdom, his Goodness, his Truth, his Justice, all stand pledged for the fulfilment of his Word: and if, notwithstanding this, we should at last fail of success, to us, as to God's people of old, may be applied that severe, but just reproof, "*O* "*Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself!*" Ye

"therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these
"things before, beware, lest ye also, being
"led away with the error of the wicked, fall
"from your own steadfastness. But grow in
"grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord
"Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now
"and for ever. Amen."

SERMON XIII.

LUKE xvi. 25.

But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

WE have in this Parable a striking representation of two persons, whose circumstances and condition, both in this life and in the next, form an awful and instructive contrast: one, possessing an abundance of this world's goods, rich and splendid, "clothed in purple "and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every "day," but afterwards doomed to everlasting shame and misery,—the other, suffering here the most calamitous state of poverty and disease, but, after death, enjoying a blessed immortality with the Father of the Faithful.

Our solicitude is naturally awakened to know wherefore such different portions were finally allotted to these men; what were the sins which brought upon the rich man such a tremendous retribution, what were the virtues

which obtained for the other so preeminent a recompense.

On these points, however, the parable does not *directly* instruct us. The rich man is not stigmatized as avaricious, oppressive, or unjust. It is not said that he obtained his wealth by iniquitous practices, or that, like the prodigal son, he "wasted his substance "in riotous living, and devoured it among "harlots." Even the charge of inhumanity towards Lazarus is not expressly stated as the offence imputed to him; although the circumstances of the Parable seem to imply, that he was too much engrossed by his own personal gratifications to regard the supplications of misery and distress. But the main features of his character are discoverable from the words of the Text; where Abraham brings to his recollection an awful truth, which in his lifetime this votary of wealth and luxury had neglected: "*Son, remember* "*that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good* "*things, and likewise Lazarus evil things:* "*but now he is comforted, and thou art tor-* "*mented.*" Amidst the fascinations of splendour and affluence, the thought of *a future state* of retribution had either been banished from his mind, or had been regarded as a superstitious dream. That *this* was his great

offence, is confirmed by the latter part of the Parable. Convinced too late of the dreadful consequences of *his own* neglect or disbelief, he entreats that Lazarus might be sent from the dead, to warn *his brethren* of the momentous truth which *they*, like him, had hitherto disregarded, and to save them from a similar doom. We may therefore well suppose the offence which brought him into this sad condemnation to have been that of an irreligious and worldly disposition, of a mind devoted to the pleasures and riches of this earthly scene, terminating all its views in present gratification, and heedless of a future state.

On the other hand, the virtues of Lazarus are not more expressly recorded than the vices of the rich man. From the inestimable reward that awaited him, we may reasonably infer the rectitude of his conduct; that "in "patience he possessed his soul," submitted to the visitation of God with humble resignation, and trusted, with a firm and undoubting mind, in the Divine mercy and goodness.

But here our inquiry as to the characters of the parties must terminate: and the further scope and design of the Parable is to be deduced chiefly from the circumstances

connected with it, and the occasion on which it was delivered.

It has been supposed that this Parable was directed chiefly to the *Sadducees*, a kind of Epicurean Sect, who denied the Resurrection of the Body and the Immortality of the Soul, and who were much addicted (as such persons usually are) to the pleasures of this life. But although the Parable is exceedingly applicable to *them*, yet, from the narrative, it rather appears to have been specially addressed to the *Pharisees*, "who," says the Evangelist, "*were covetous*, and "*derided him*." It is, however, a matter of comparatively little importance, whether it was intended for *one* of these Sects in particular, or for *both;* since it evidently abounds with weighty and momentous instruction to *every* class of readers or hearers, in whatever station, age, or country.

In the first place, it clearly teaches that neither prosperity nor adversity in this present life can afford any certain criterion of the Divine favour or displeasure; each being distributed, as God sees fit, for the trial and probation of those to whom it is allotted.

The opposite conditions of the persons here described, with respect to this world and the next, afford a decisive proof that we shall

make a very false estimate of any man's real happiness, if we judge of it only according to his outward state and appearance in the present life. If temporal enjoyments or temporal afflictions were sure indications of God's approbation or disapprobation, the result in a Future State would correspond with that which now takes place. But the Parable gives a directly contrary representation: and in so doing it effectually vindicates the dispensations of the Almighty in the distribution of present good and evil. The pomp and luxury of the rich man, viewed with reference to his subsequent condition, appear as most bitter evils; while the wretchedness of Lazarus, being brought into contact with the happiness and glory following as its immediate consequence, is viewed as in reality a blessing. So palpable must this be to the mind even of the most ordinary observer, that we can hardly conceive any man so infatuated, that, if the choice were presented to him, he would not rather forego all the good things the rich man possessed than incur his subsequent misery; or willingly endure the sufferings of Lazarus, for the sake of that "fulness of joy" with which they were afterwards so amply recompensed.

To this point the words of the Text seem

to be more immediately applicable:—"Son, "remember, that thou in thy lifetime re-"ceivedst thy good things, and likewise La-"zarus evil things: but now he is comforted, "and thou art tormented." It has been observed by most commentators, that the words here addressed to the Rich Man are *emphatical*, and have a peculiar force as applied to *his* case:—"Thou in thy lifetime receivedst "THY good things,"—those things which he then preferred above all others, and in which he had centred all his enjoyments, his desires, and expectations. He had *received* these things, in the fullest acceptation of the term, as looking for nothing further; in the same sense in which our Lord says elsewhere of those who performed their alms or their devotions to be seen of men only, "Verily, I "say unto you, they *have* their reward,"—they have it *now*, and will have no claim to it hereafter:—and again, "Woe unto you "rich, for ye have *received* your consolation," implying, that, having placed their whole trust and confidence in worldly possessions, they should find no consolation in a state where these could not avail them.

Such comparisons of this world with the next, teach us how inconsiderately we oftentimes envy those above us, or despise those

who are below us, as to worldly circumstances. They shew that no station in this life is to be considered as the standard of a man's deserts, or to be judged of abstractedly from the conduct of its possessor. They admonish us also, that the Almighty in thus unequally, yet unpartially, distributing temporal good and evil among the sons of men, intended that we should become instruments of our own final happiness or misery, by acquitting ourselves, under whatever circumstances, as accountable before him.

That the Jewish Rulers and Teachers stood greatly in need of such admonitions, may be inferred from our Lord's frequent and severe reproofs of their misconduct, in many of the most important relations of social life. But, in truth, the instruction is of too general importance to be confined to any age or nation. For, where is the person, whether Jew or Christian, who is not often tempted by riches and pleasures, to fix his thoughts and affections upon this present world, and to forget that for all these things he must hereafter be brought to judgment? Whatever might be the other offences of the rich man in the Parable, whether he was unjust, oppressive, intemperate, or uncharitable, (respecting which the Parable itself conveys no positive infor-

mation,) it is at least evident that he was one of those who considered the world as if it were made merely for him to take his pastime therein; or as if he might live in it for ever, and have no account to give of his stewardship, when he should be no longer steward. And characters of this description are, it is to be feared, but too frequent, not only among Sceptics and Unbelievers, but even among those who profess to be Believers in the Word of God.

Every circumstance introduced into the Parable has a tendency to awaken the mind to an awful contemplation of *a Future State*, and to heighten the impression of it by the glowing colours in which it is represented.

The narrative is told with exquisite simplicity and pathos. "There was a certain "rich man, which was clothed in purple and "fine linen, and fared sumptuously every "day: and there was a certain beggar named "Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full "of sores, and desiring to be fed with the "crumbs which fell from the rich man's ta-"ble:"—*desiring* to be fed;—an expression which intimates that his wretched state had hitherto excited no attention or commiseration—and, perhaps, that his request was denied:—"moreover, the dogs came and licked

"his sores." The inhumanity, or the *neglect*, at least, of the Rich Man, and the patience and humility of Lazarus, are here pretty clearly implied.

"And it came to pass that the beggar died, "and was carried by the angels into Abra-"ham's bosom." "*Into Abraham's bosom*"—an expression familiar to the Jews, denoting the happy state of departed spirits, between Death and the Resurrection: or rather, denoting, in this instance, the highest degree of honour and felicity in that state. It is a figure of speech adopted from the custom of ancient times, that the person highest in rank or favour at an entertainment reclined upon the same couch with the Master of the feast. Hence St. John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, is said to have "*leaned on Jesus' bo-"som.*" And as our Lord elsewhere described the happiness of the Blessed by saying that "they should *sit down with* Abraham, and "Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of Hea-"ven," Lazarus's *lying in Abraham's bosom* may easily be understood to denote his advancement to a state of preeminent reward.

"The rich man also died, and was bu-"ried."—He *also* died.—His riches were of no avail to avert the stroke of death. All

that his wealth could then procure for him was the distinction of funeral pomp.

"And in hell" (in Hades, the invisible receptacle of all departed spirits before the general Resurrection) "he lift up his eyes, "being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar "off, and Lazarus in his bosom: and he cried, "and said, Father Abraham, have mercy upon "me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the "tip of his finger in water, and cool my "tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." Here is figuratively represented the *intermediate* state of the *wicked* also between Death and the Resurrection:—a state of *consciousness* both of what is past, and of what is to come;—a state of tormenting disquietude and dread of final judgment, and of fruitless remorse and lamentation for what is irrecoverably lost. That the soul, when separated from the body, still retains such a consciousness, and such a susceptibility of enjoyment or suffering, may justly be inferred from this Parable. Respecting the *mode* of its existence in that state, all inquiry must at present be fruitless: for, says the Apostle, "it doth "not yet appear what we shall be." That the Jews, however, professed their belief in this, is evident from a remarkable passage in the Apocryphal book of the Wisdom of Solo-

mon, which may serve as an admirable comment on this part of the Parable. "Then "shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted "him, and made no account of his labours. "When they see it, they shall be troubled "with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at "the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. And they "repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit shall say within themselves, This was "he, whom we had sometimes in derision, "and a proverb of reproach: we fools accounted his life madness, and his end to "be without honour: how is he numbered "among the children of God, and his lot is "among the saints!—What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches with "our vaunting brought us? All those things "are passed away like a shadow—But the "righteous live for evermore; their reward "also is with the Lord, and the care of them "is with the Most High."

The Parable then goes on to state another fearful consideration on this subject, that the condition of the wicked after Death will be thenceforth *unalterably* determined. When the Rich Man entreated Abraham to send Lazarus to his relief, the Patriarch, after ad-

verting to the striking reverse which had taken place in their conditions, adds, "And "besides all this, between us and you there "is a great gulph fixed; so that they which "would pass from hence to you, can not; "neither can they pass to us that would "come from thence." What becomes, then, of the Popish dream of *Purgatory*, of *Masses* for the dead, or of the supernumerary *Merits* of departed Saints to be *transferred* to others for their release from the pains of Eternal Death? Vain and presumptuous speculations! Even in the intermediate state here described, no intercourse may take place between the righteous and the wicked, so as to afford the latter any possibility of retrieving what they have lost. It is a state, though not final, yet of certain *anticipation* of that which will be final: a state of joyful or fearful expectation of that summons, when "all "that are in the graves shall hear the voice "of the Son of Man, and shall come forth; "they that have done good, unto the resur-"rection of life; and they that have done "evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

The subsequent request of the Rich Man in the Parable, that Lazarus might be sent from the dead to warn his brethren who were still on earth, "lest they also should

"come into that place of torment," leads to a further admonition of universal importance. "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses "and the Prophets; let them hear them. "And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if "one went unto them from the dead, they "will repent. And he said unto him, If they "hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither "will they be persuaded, though one rose "from the dead."

The Rich Man is here addressed by Abraham as a *Jewish* believer; as one who *professed*, at least, to be a disciple of Moses and the Prophets. No sincere believer under that Dispensation could be ignorant of his obligations to a life of holiness and virtue, or of the eternal recompense of his deeds, whether good or evil. However burthensome might be the Ritual of the Mosaic Law, and however multiplied its external ordinances, the Jews were expressly taught by their divinely-inspired Teachers, that these would be utterly unavailing, unless accompanied with the inward dispositions of righteousness and purity which alone could render them acceptable in the sight of God. The animated exhortations of the Prophets to "turn from their iniquities," and to "make their ways and their doings good;" the magnificent pro-

mises and encouragements to such as would hearken to their instructions, and the heavy denunciations against the heedless and disobedient;—were in themselves sufficient, (exclusive of that general knowledge of a future state which was imparted from the beginning by Divine Revelation,) to make them look forward to another and more perfect state of being, in which all these expectations were to be fulfilled.

We need not stronger evidence to prove that a Future State of Rewards and Punishments was sufficiently revealed under the Jewish Dispensation, than this reference, which our Lord puts into the mouth of Abraham to Moses and the Prophets; and especially the emphatical declaration, that "if "they believed not Moses and the Prophets, "neither would they be persuaded, though "one rose from the Dead." The fact appears to be, that although it was not the purpose of the Mosaic Dispensation to make an *express* Revelation of that Doctrine, yet it clearly *recognised* the Doctrine as *already* made known. It is every where presupposed in the writings of Moses and the Prophets, and is often noticed incidentally as an Article of Faith then generally received. The Patriarchs before the Jews universally acted

upon it: and from them the Jews having thus been instructed in it from the beginning, no further Revelation of it to *them* was necessary.

The Parable too, in this particular, may be considered as glancing at the perverseness of the Jews in resisting the evidence of those special miracles which our Lord wrought in confirmation of this very doctrine; such as restoring to life the Widow's Son, and Jairus's Daughter; and raising Lazarus from the dead, after he had lain four days in the grave. Still more keenly also did this reproof point, by anticipation, to their subsequent want of Faith, when even the marvellous work of his own Resurrection proved insufficient to overcome their blindness and hardness of heart.

To the case of the Jews, then, whom our Lord specially addressed, this Parable, in all its circumstances, most forcibly applied. But with scarcely less force does it still apply to the case of every individual whose disbelief or disregard of the Doctrine it inculcates exposes them to a similar condemnation. Nay, if such were the obligations incurred under the *Mosaical*, how much stronger must they be under the *Christian* Dispensation! If the disciple of Moses and the Prophets was in-

excusable in neglecting the work of Salvation, what plea can be advanced for the disciple of CHRIST? That which under the LAW might be deemed comparatively dark and obscure, is now rendered clear and manifest by the GOSPEL. To every believer in CHRIST, "Life and Immortality are brought "to light." The rich man was persuaded that "if one went unto them from the Dead," his brethren "would repent." To the *Christian* this evidence *has been vouchsafed.* To prove the certainty of our own Resurrection, and to establish on an immovable foundation every article of Faith and every Rule of Practice which it was the purpose of his Ministry to inculcate, our Lord hath actually "risen from the dead," and "become the first-"fruits of them that slept."

Thus the Parable extends to all under whatever Dispensation of Revealed Religion, and to all of whatever station of life, high or low, rich or poor, who have come to the knowledge of the Truth. It teaches that universally important rule of life, "so to use "this world, as not abusing it, and so to pass "through things temporal, as finally to lose "not the things eternal." For, though the Parable sets before us the case of a rich man under sentence of condemnation, and of a

poor destitute man inheriting eternal blessedness; yet we are not to suppose that these were necessarily the result, either of the poverty of the one, or of the wealth of the other. Our Lord hath indeed said, "How "*hardly* shall they that have riches enter into "the kingdom of God!" and the Parable may be considered as a striking illustration of that saying. But though riches bring with them many temptations, and too frequently corrupt the heart, and indispose it to the practice of Religion and to preparation for a future state; yet, God forbid that we should deem them either an excuse for sin, or an unavoidable occasion of falling! Rather may we say, that as riches afford more extensive opportunities of doing good, they may assuredly be rendered instrumental to the highest degree of eternal as well as temporal well-being, to those upon whom they are bestowed. It was not, therefore, the *wealth* of the man in the Parable, but his *abuse* of wealth, which involved him in so dreadful a condemnation. It was his *irreligious* temper, his devotedness to *self-indulgence*, his *unfeeling neglect of others*, his *exclusive attachment to this present world*, and his *disregard of a future state*, that brought him into the pit of destruction:—and these would equally have

wrought his ruin, whatever had been his allotment here on earth. On the other hand, Lazarus's indigent and afflicted state would have laid no foundation for his subsequent blessedness, had it not been borne with that humility, patience, and religious trust in God, for the proof of which such visitations are sent by our heavenly Father; and where those dispositions prevail, and are duly exercised, whether under prosperous or adverse circumstances, (for surely they *may* prevail and be exercised in either,) they will not ultimately fail of an abundant recompense.

Let no man say, then, If I had been rich, I should have practised such a virtue; or, If I had been poor, I should have escaped such a sin: but rather let him say, I stand self-condemned in every transgression or omission, whether I am poor or rich. Temptations there are in every condition of life:—but with every temptation there is also a "way "to escape, that we may be able to bear it." *An habitual sense of Religious Duty* is the only sure preservative against all temptations. A deep and strong conviction of the comparative insignificance of temporal things, whether good or evil, when weighed in the balance against an eternity of happiness or misery, is the main antidote to every unruly

passion or sentiment which would divert us from the straight path of Duty. Are we beset by the alluring pleasures of society, by the opportunities which affluence affords us of pursuing the corrupt bent of our inclinations without restraint, and of gratifying ourselves, to the neglect of religious duties, of the charities of life, and of Self-Discipline?—let us call to mind the wretchedness which awaits those who have *received* all their imaginary good things in this life, and who have nothing to expect hereafter, but a state of torment aggravated by the recollection of their folly and perverseness. Are we in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity?—let us call to mind, how comparatively light are any *temporal* afflictions, if they "work for "us an exceeding and eternal weight of "glory."

These instructive lessons we learn, not only from the affecting representation in the Parable before us, but from the general design and tenor of the Christian Dispensation. "For, the grace of God that bringeth Salva-"tion hath appeared to all men, teaching "us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly "lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, "and godly, in this present world; looking "for that blessed hope, and the glorious ap-

"pearing of the great God and our Saviour "Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that "he might redeem us from all iniquity, and "purify unto himself a peculiar people, zeal-"ous of good works." Under all our trials and difficulties, *that* "hope" will be "an "anchor of the soul both sure and stead-"fast:"—and whatever may be the dangers incidental to our temporal condition, "this is "the Victory which overcometh the world, "even our FAITH."

SERMON XIV.

MATTH. xiii. 30.

Let both grow together until the Harvest.

THE subjects on which men are, perhaps, most prone to form a judgment, and most liable to judge erroneously, are those which relate to God's *moral* government of the world. The ways of Divine Providence oftentimes baffle human expectations. Unable to attain to that comprehensive knowledge, which embraces at one view an universal series of Causes and Effects, we vainly endeavour to fathom the depths of those Counsels, or to discover the expediency of those measures, which proceed from infinite Wisdom, working without any hinderance either to his Power or his Will. Yet are we so deeply interested in the result of those Counsels and those measures, that it is scarcely possible not to feel a *desire*, at least, to find out the reasons on which they are grounded, and the purposes for which they are intended. And if this desire transgress not its proper bounds;

if it be carried no farther than is consistent with the Reverence due to Divine Perfection, and the Submission due to the Divine Will; it may help to strengthen our Faith, to fortify us in our Obedience, and to put to silence the cavils of the sceptical and profane.

But it is seldom that such inquiries are submitted to these necessary restraints, except by those who are content to take the Word of God as the rule and measure by which to judge of the Divine proceedings. And even the measure which that Word supplies, exacts from us such *Faith* in the Moral and Natural Perfections of the Supreme Being, as will lead us to acquiesce in a persuasion of the Wisdom and Justice of all his Dispensations, however past our finding out; so that where neither our own Sagacity can unravel the perplexities that beset us, nor the revealed Will of God hath enabled us to remove them, we shall hold it meet to restrain our curiosity, and to adore in silence.

Among the difficulties of this kind which most perplex us, and which sometimes occasion painful disquietude even to the most pious and humble minds, are those which relate to the great extent of *Moral Evil* in this our present state of existence. When we read the history of mankind, and see through

how lengthened a period of time, the grossest superstition in religious belief, and the most detestable enormities in moral conduct, overspread the greater part of the habitable globe;—when we observe how large a portion of it still labours under similar infatuation;—when we find the annals of almost every age and country blazoning the crimes and follies which have inflicted misery upon mankind;—when we are compelled to acknowledge, that the greatest blessing which was ever bestowed upon mankind, Christianity itself, has encountered obloquy and persecution, has been opposed and ridiculed by some, perverted and corrupted by others, and oftentimes made the occasion, not of bringing *peace* upon the earth, but a *sword;*—when, moreover, not only *public* evils of such magnitude, but *private* instances innumerable occur, of goodness depressed and suffering, or of wickedness flourishing and prosperous;—no ordinary degree of *faith* seems to be necessary, to sustain the mind in a confident persuasion that these things come to pass with the permission and under the sanction of an all-wise and all-powerful Governor of the Universe. That God is "of purer eyes "than to behold iniquity" with complacency or indifference, neither Revelation nor Rea-

son will permit us to doubt. Whence comes it, then, that not only in times and countries barbarous and uncivilized, but even in those where the light of the Gospel hath long since shed its lustre, Infidelity, Immorality, and Error abound? Why are these suffered to exist, and sometimes even to prevail over Truth and Virtue? Why are the wicked permitted, in any case, to prosper, to obstruct the labours of the good, to bring scandal upon Religion itself? Whence is it, that the enemy and the blasphemer are thus encouraged to cast upon the measures of that Providence, which they wantonly arraign, the imputation of supineness or injustice?

The Parable from which the words of the text are taken, may be successfully applied to the removal of any such dangerous and ill-founded imaginations.

"The kingdom of heaven," says our Lord, "is likened unto a man which sowed good "seed in his field: but while men slept, "his enemy came and sowed tares among "the wheat, and went his way. But when "the blade was sprung up, and brought forth "fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the "servants of the householder came, and said "unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed "in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

"He said unto them, An enemy hath done "this. The servants said unto him, Wilt "thou then that we go and gather them "up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye "gather up the tares, ye root up also the "wheat with them. Let both grow together "until the harvest: and in the time of har-"vest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye "together first the tares, and bind them in "bundles to burn them: but gather the "wheat into my barn."

This Parable our Lord afterwards explained to his Disciples in the following manner:

"He that soweth the good seed is the Son "of Man; the field is the world; the good "seed are the children of the kingdom; but "the tares are the children of the wicked "one; the enemy that sowed them is the "Devil; the harvest is the end of the world; "and the reapers are the angels. As there-"fore the tares are gathered and burned in "the fire, so shall it be in the end of the "world. The Son of Man shall send forth "his angels, and they shall gather out of his "kingdom all things that offend, and them "which do iniquity; and shall cast them into "a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and "gnashing of teeth. Then shall the right-

" eous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom
" of their Father."

The Parable, in its full acceptation, undoubtedly has reference not to the Jews only, nor to Believers of that particular period, but to the general state of Revealed Religion, in every age and country. It points, first, to the *origin* of that abundance of Moral Evil, which prevails within as well as without the pale of the Christian Church: secondly, it assigns the *reason* why this is permitted by the Sovereign Disposer of all things: thirdly, it predicts the entire *removal* of the Evil, when the Almighty shall have accomplished all the purposes of his providential government of the Church in its present state.

There is no question more perplexing to the human mind, than that on which this Parable first and chiefly instructs us, the *origin of Moral Evil.* The existence of the Evil is indisputable; but, without the aid of Revelation, it is a problem we are unable to solve. The light of the Scriptures, though it enables us not to unravel all its intricacies, is sufficient to secure us against the fatal errors and delusions, from which those who reject that light can with difficulty escape.

We learn from Holy Writ, that Man, when he came forth from the hands of his Creator,

was among those works of Creation which the Divine Author of Nature declared to be "*very good.*" We learn also, that he was created with a capacity of becoming *evil.* This is implied in the prohibition that was given him, and in the punishment threatened in case of his disobedience. It is indeed inseparable from the notion of a state of *Moral Probation.*

But how, in a state of perfect Innocence, and where all things around him were likewise good and perfect in their kind, any *temptation* to Evil could arise, it is more difficult to conceive. Revelation clears up this point, by acquainting us with the existence of an *Evil Being*, himself fallen from a state of native excellence and perfection; who, from whatever motives of envy or of malice, sought to work the ruin of, as yet, unoffending Man. To the suggestions of this malignant Spirit, our first Parents yielded, and fell;—fell from Innocence to Guilt, from a happy consciousness of God's favour to a just dread of his displeasure;—from unmixed and perfect Enjoyment of Good, to a state of intermingled Good and Evil; in which the one or the other is found to preponderate, according as the individual approaches nearer to, or recedes farther from, that primitive nature of

our first Parents, which has thus, through their transgression, been corrupted and debased.

This Scriptural statement of the Origin of Evil, with whatever particular difficulties it may be attended, has, at least, the twofold advantage, that it both accords with the actual condition of mankind in all known ages of the world, and vindicates the Creator from the charge of being the Author of Evil. Universal Experience confirms the doctrine of Scripture, that no son of Adam is free from moral guilt. Reason concurs with Revelation, that this was not, could not have been, the condition in which any being at first issued from the hands of his Creator. And when the question is asked, *Whence cometh Evil?* what more satisfactory answer can be given, than that which the same Divine Oracles made known to us, "*An enemy hath done* "*this?*"

But if God was not the *Author* of Evil, neither may we suppose him to be *regardless of its effects.* No sooner was man become its unhappy victim, than the mercy of the Creator interposed to mitigate its present consequences, and to avert the final destruction which it would otherwise have wrought. The promise of a *Redeemer* followed instantly

upon the work of the *Destroyer*, and afforded a sacred pledge that the blow aimed at man's happiness had failed of its main object. Nor to Adam only was this assurance given. To his posterity it was from time to time renewed, in fuller measure, and in more explicit terms, as the exigencies of mankind required, and as the time approached for its actual completion.

Nevertheless, this merciful interposition extended not to the immediate *Extinction* of *Evil*, nor to the instant *Destruction* of the *Enemy*. On the contrary, that Dispensation by which Man is restored to the Divine Favour, is itself continually exposed to the assaults of the Adversary. The good seed, the Word of God, is scattered abundantly throughout the Christian world; and many are the good fruits it produces. But many also are the evil agents actively employed in endeavouring to obstruct its growth. The tares of Impiety, Unbelief, Pride, Presumption, Heresy, Hypocrisy, are perpetually springing up around us, and indicate, but too plainly, the unremitting diligence of the enemy. Nor is it in the power of human vigilance always to be upon the guard against these efforts. "While men *slept*," says the Parable, "the "enemy came, and sowed tares, and went

"his way." No opportunity is lost, whether of unavoidable infirmity, or of culpable inattention, on the part of those who should guard the Truth, to introduce confusion and mischief. The history of the Christian Church, external and internal, in its detail of Persecutions, Corruptions, and Divisions, affords ample proof of the indefatigable labours of its opponents. Nor need we go further back than our own times, for evidences of this kind too palpable to be unobserved.

When those who themselves are occupied in producing such evils, perceive these effects of their labours, it is natural that they should exult in the seeming triumph they have obtained: and when the pious and well-disposed contemplate these discouraging appearances, the temptation to dissatisfaction and despondency is difficult to resist. Unless they have *Faith* to "remove mountains;" *Hope*, to be "an anchor of the soul, both "sure and steadfast;" *Charity*, that "beareth "and endureth all things;" the too probable consequence will be, a general mistrust of God's Providence, and a general defection from their duty. "Because iniquity shall "abound, the love of many will wax cold."

To counteract such unfavourable impres-

sions, the Parable assigns, in the next place, the *reason* why this state of things is suffered to continue. The servants of the householder were desirous to clear the field of the tares: they "said unto him, Wilt thou, "then, that we go and gather them up? "But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather "up the tares, ye root up also the wheat "with them."

Here a decisive answer is given, so far as the Divine Justice and Goodness are concerned. The evil is permitted, to prevent still *greater* evil. In this present world, (and it is with respect to the *present* world only, that the complaint has any foundation,) mankind are so necessarily dependent upon each other, and their interests in the social body are so interwoven together, as not to be separated without mutual injury; and from the very attempt to extirpate the offending part of mankind, evil and destruction might ensue to the unoffending.

When Abraham interceded with the Almighty for the guilty city of Sodom, this was the ground of his supplication;—"Wilt thou "also slay the righteous with the wicked?"—Nor did the Almighty reject the plea; but declared, that if there were *ten* righteous persons in the place, he would not destroy it,

for *their* sakes. And why may not the same consideration be supposed to prevail, in the ordinary administration of God's Moral Government of the world? What can be more agreeable to our own ideas of Justice and of Mercy, than such forbearance? Who does not feel for the miseries unavoidably inflicted by War, upon multitudes who are entirely innocent of offence? In any public calamity by which a nation is visited, how impossible is it, for *human* judgment, at least, to discriminate between the deserving and the undeserving? Or, how can we conceive even Omnipotence itself, except by a continual intervention of *Miracles*, to inflict *full* temporal retribution upon the wicked portion of any great community, without bringing ruin upon many whose preservation the public welfare demands? Can even any individual offender suffer the penalties of human Law, without inflicting some portion of suffering upon the innocent persons unhappily connected with him by inseparable ties?

This one consideration may well be deemed sufficient to counterbalance any surmises injurious to the Divine Attributes and Perfections, in reflecting upon that part of the Moral System, by which vice and iniquity are still permitted to abound. It can be no

derogation from those Perfections, to believe, that he who seeth the whole series of consequences that would ensue from an immediate interposition to remove these evils, seeth also, that it is, upon the whole, best for His creatures, and therefore best for the final vindication of his Government of the Universe, to allow the *ordinary* operation of second causes to take effect, without interposing *extraordinary* means to prevent or restrain them.

Our confidence, however, in this persuasion, would not, we must confess, be full and perfect, had we not the most entire reliance on that *future state of retribution*, in which all these seeming obliquities and imperfections shall be rectified, and the veil of obscurity and darkness which now intercepts our view shall be withdrawn. This expectation is, indeed, *presupposed*, in every view of the subject which the Scriptures set before us; and most distinctly is it recognised in the conclusion of this Parable:—"Let both grow "together until the harvest: and, in the "time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind "them in bundles to burn them; but gather "the wheat into my barn."

As far as relates to our *individual* interest

in the subject, this assurance is perfect. Whatever be the present prosperity of the unrighteous, the time is hastening on, when "all things that offend shall be rooted out." Whatever be the trials and tribulations of the faithful Disciple, he already anticipates the blissful period, when "the righteous "shall shine forth as the sun, in the king-"dom of their Father."

In a more enlarged contemplation of the subject, the assurance is no less perfect of the ultimate triumph of Religion itself over every opponent. Though many and scandalous have been the defections from the Christian Faith; though many and grievous have been the trials and persecutions to which it has been exposed; and though it be still made a by-word and reproach by the scoffer and blasphemer;—yet our trust is in HIM, who hath promised that "the gates of hell "shall not prevail against it." It is built on a Rock; and its defence is in the hands of an invisible, but all-powerful Protector. Internally, as well as externally, it may be assailed, undermined, corrupted. But when the time of its purification arrives, these injuries shall cease. The powers of darkness shall no longer have any influence over it. The tares shall be rooted out; and the harvest

of good seed, plenteous and flourishing, shall be gathered to its final abode.

The Parable under our consideration, while it thus obviates some of the main difficulties respecting the ways of Providence, conveys to us also some practical lessons of high importance. It teaches us, with *Faith* to rely upon the promises of God, that "all things "shall work together for good to them that "love him;"—with *Patience* to wait his appointed time;—with *Vigilance* to counteract the work of the enemy;—with *Forbearance* and *Circumspection* to take heed lest any rash and intemperate zeal defeat even our best purposes;—with profound *Submission* to resign ourselves to that Omniscient Being, who is ever forwarding his own beneficent designs, even when to our shortsighted view they appear to be most in danger; whose especial prerogative it is to bring good out of evil; whose counsels "are like to the "great deep;" whose "judgments are un-"searchable, and his ways past finding "out."

But, in imbibing these salutary lessons from this portion of Sacred Instruction, let us beware that we do not wrest it to any sinister purpose. It were a dangerous Error to suppose, that, because the Almighty thus

suffers so great a portion of moral evil to prevail, he is therefore an unconcerned spectator of it, or that he altogether forbears interposition in the affairs of this lower world. The contrary is evident from Scripture itself. The Jewish Theocracy was one continued display of his power and justice in upholding righteousness and correcting disobedience. From its extraordinary and wonderful operation in this respect, is derived one of the strongest demonstrative proofs of its Divine origin. *Other* histories also teem with evidences, convincing, though less directly conclusive, that in the *moral*, as well as in the *physical* world, the Omnipotent hath never "left himself without witness" of his superintending agency. Wherever triumphant wickedness has been suddenly laid low, or depressed piety and virtue has unexpectedly emerged from its humiliation; — wherever signal deliverances of God's Church and its faithful members have been wrought, manifestly transcending all human hope and expectation;—wherever even personal prosperity or adversity has been indisputably the reward of integrity, on the one hand, or the chastisement of misconduct, on the other;—we may recognise, without presumption, the hand of an overruling Providence; nay, we

are bound to contemplate the event as proceeding from the Righteous Governor of the Universe, and intended to inspire us with so much firmer confidence in that more perfect dispensation which is hereafter to ensue.

The ordinary course of Divine Providence appears, indeed, to be so regulated, as both to give us this assurance of more complete retribution in a *Future* State; and to shew, at the same time, how much greater evils than those which now prevail might result from a relentless execution of Judgment in the present world. Observe how, even in the present modified distribution of Justice here, the effect operates promiscuously upon the guilty and the innocent. In great public calamities, we often see and acknowledge the avenging hand of the Almighty. But do not the righteous evidently suffer with the wicked? Does the fire, the pestilence, the famine, or the sword, extend its ravages to the one, and spare the other? In like manner, we see vindictive Justice executed, by *human* laws, on the offender who pays the forfeit of his crimes. But does the criminal *alone* suffer? Is he so *insulated* a being in society, that none who are undeserving of punishment participate in the evil that overtakes him? Yet the Providence of God suf-

fers these things to take place; and in so doing teaches us, first, that his *Justice* slumbereth not, however the execution of it may in numberless instances be for a while suspended; and, secondly, that his *Forbearance*, while it gives the wicked space for repentance, may be an act of mercy towards those of the righteous whose present welfare is involved in theirs.

Another necessary caution must here be given. The view which the Parable gives us of the *Divine* forbearance towards the wicked, has no reference to the administration of *human* justice; which, from the very nature of it, extends only to this present life, and must either be executed *here*, or become altogether nugatory and useless. If the magistrate "beareth not the sword in vain;"—if he is sent "for the punishment of evil "doers, and for the praise of them that do "well;"—then is he so far commissioned to execute the Divine Will, in doing justice and judgment, according to the best exercise of human discernment, unswayed by corrupt or partial affections. By an Omniscient and Omnipotent Being, the laws of his own unerring wisdom may be enforced or suspended, at his will and pleasure, with reference to that *universal* good which is ever

present to His view. But with Man, it is far otherwise. His finite nature and limited faculties incapacitate him for such vast and comprehensive rules of action. He is bound, therefore, to govern and be governed by the Laws which emanate from the Will of his Creator; administering them as being himself accountable to the Supreme Lawgiver and Judge for his faithfulness in so doing. Moreover, his due exercise of this delegated power from on high, coincides, in effect, with the merciful purpose of his heavenly Father; since it renders less necessary those tremendous visitations of Divine Judgment, which otherwise would be needful for the correction of mankind, and which, in their awful course, carry terror and consternation, suffering and dismay, even to the innocent and unoffending.

Yet another observation, of personal concern to every one, is deducible from the subject before us. The righteous, however comparatively few in number, are a blessing to the whole community. They bring down upon the community that Divine favour and protection, which is its best, its *only* effectual security. Who knows how often public calamities may be suspended, mitigated, or re-

moved, that these may not be involved in the general ruin? Who knows how many wicked may daily be spared from destruction, lest some guiltless individuals should be implicated in their fate? Could we discern the full extent of the benefits thus derived from the exemplary conduct of the virtuous; and still more, perhaps, from their prayers and intercessions for those who are utterly regardless of their own perilous state; we should probably need no further arguments, to convince us of the wisdom as well as the benevolence of that Divine forbearance, which thus suffers, for a while, "one event "to happen to the righteous and the wick-"ed," and which is "kind unto the unthank-"ful and to the evil."

However imperfect, then, may be our conception of so vast and complicated a subject, we may discern enough to assure us that "the Judge of all the earth will do right," and will hereafter vindicate his ways, beyond all possibility of doubt or misapprehension. We know, that finally, the righteous shall have no cause for repining, nor the wicked for boasting;—that the one shall be compelled to acknowledge the folly of gaining the whole world, if he lose his own soul;

and the other gladly confess, that "the suf-
"ferings of this present world are not worthy
"to be compared with the glory that shall
"be revealed in them." In *both*, the triumph
of faith will be complete; and "the Almighty
"will be justified in his saying, and clear
"when he is judged."

SERMON XV.

JOHN xiv. 6.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

THESE words form a part of that affecting conference which our Lord held with his disciples, on the eve of his sufferings; when he laboured to prepare them for the awful trial of their faith, then fast approaching, and with strong expressions of regard administered such consolation as might best support them under so severe a conflict.

It is impossible to express in stronger terms than in those of our blessed Saviour, that great and momentous truth, that to HIM we owe every rational and well-grounded hope or expectation of eternal life. It was on the eve of his departure from this world, that he discoursed with his disciples on those points most calculated to comfort them under the prospect of his removal from them, to en-

courage them to persevere in the truths he had inculcated upon them. But when some of them expressed doubts and uncertainties as to the mode in which his promises should be fulfilled, he recalls them to that faith and trust in him which his wonderful works and his heavenly instruction had already entitled him to expect from them;—and the more impressively to fix these things in their minds, he thus with peculiar force and energy asserts his claim to their affection, reverence, and obedience:—"I am the way, "the truth, and the life: no man cometh "unto the Father, but by me."

In the verses immediately preceding the text, he assures them that his departure from this world was not to be a *final*, but only a *temporary*, separation. "Let not your "heart be troubled: ye believe in God, be-"lieve also in me. In my Father's house "are many mansions: if it were not so, I "would have told you. I go to prepare a "place for you. And if I go and prepare a "place for you, I will come again, and receive "you unto myself; that where I am, there "ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, "and the way ye know."

It required, on the part of the Apostles, more than ordinary faith, to receive these

sayings without disquietude. Did their Lord mean, that he was about to quit them for a short season only, and to obtain for them some *temporal* possession, whither they should forthwith follow him;—or did he mean, that he was about to leave this world, with no intention of meeting them again on this side of the grave; thus destroying all their earthly hopes and expectations?

Such appear to have been the doubts and apprehensions floating in the mind of *one*, at least, of the Apostles, *Thomas;* whose conduct, after our Lord's resurrection, shewed him to be somewhat prone to scepticism and mistrust. "Lord," says he, "we know not "*whither* thou goest: and how can we know "the *way?* Jesus saith unto him, *I am the* "*way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh* "*unto the Father, but by me.*"

Our Lord's answer (were we to interpret it largely, according to the tenor of his whole discourse) might admit of some such paraphrase as this: "The *place* whither I am "going, and where I have promised to pre- "pare for *your* reception also, is a seat of bliss "in the mansions of my Father. There is "no *way* of obtaining this, but by faith in "me; by embracing my doctrine, and obey- "ing my commandments. I am the *truth*

"also, as well as the way; nor can any other "teacher have the sanction of Divine au- "thority, unless his doctrine corresponds "with mine. I am the *life* also: it is by "me alone, that immortality is restored to "mankind: nor can there, without me, be "any assurance of everlasting bliss. No man, "therefore, cometh unto the Father, but by "ME. No man can attain to the true know- "ledge of God here, or to the enjoyment of "his presence hereafter, but through the "means which I have provided."

My intention however, in the present discourse, is to apply it only to some points most essential to human happiness, in which, without the light of the Gospel, man is incapable of discovering the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life*; and to shew how clearly that light enables him to discern whatever is necessary for his satisfaction in these momentous inquiries.

The attainment of *happiness* is unquestionably the main object which a rational creature must be supposed to have in view:—of happiness through every stage of existence for which he is intended, whether in this life or in another. Any doubt respecting the means of obtaining it must create uneasiness: any hazard being excluded from happiness

or of incurring misery, and that even for an endless duration, cannot but occasion anxiety and dejection.

The first great question, therefore, which presents itself, is, whether the *present* life be *all* that we are to enjoy? *If it be*, then ought our conduct to be framed with reference to that only. *If it be not*, then will common prudence suggest, that we must take into account the next world as well as this, and provide for our well-being *there*, as well as *here*.

Now upon this great point, whether we are to die like the beasts that perish or to live through endless ages, Reason, unassisted by the light of Revelation, does not afford any absolute certainty. That by attentively considering the faculties of the human mind, and reflecting upon what are called the natural and moral evidences of a future state, (i. e. upon the continual decay and renovation of nature, and upon the imperfect distribution of rewards and punishments in this present life,) we might conjecture the *probability* of our being destined to some higher and nobler purposes than any which can here be answered;—may be readily acknowledged. The supposition, too, is strongly confirmed, not only by the arguments of many among

the heathen philosophers, but also (as far as it can be ascertained) by the general sentiment of mankind. Such expectations, however, may probably have been derived (together with many other religious tenets) from remains of original revelations made to the patriarchs of old, rather than from the abstract reasonings of those by whom they were entertained. And this opinion is much corroborated by the well-known fact, that, even in modern times and in the most civilized countries, when men cast off their faith in Revealed Religion, they appear to be scarcely less bewildered in these speculations, than if they had lived among nations altogether uncivilized and barbarous. It were easy to produce instances of this kind, even from among persons making pretensions to the most profound philosophy, and gifted with intellectual powers above the ordinary level of mankind.

It appears then, that, setting aside the instruction derived from Revelation, men are at a loss, in the very outset of their investigations, respecting a point, which by any serious and reflecting mind cannot be contemplated without painful solicitude. For a man's feelings must be deadened, as well as his understanding blinded, if he can continue entirely at ease under any doubt upon

a subject so inseparably blended with the strongest hopes and fears that can agitate the human mind.

But, however lightly some may regard this truth, or however sceptical others may be concerning it, this, at least, may be affirmed, that no man can prove, that there is *not* a future state. To establish this *negative*, is beyond the power of human ingenuity. Libertines and Atheists may scoff at the doctrine, and assert, with a hardihood and intrepidity that may well excite amazement, whatever their deluded imaginations suggest; but neither scoffs nor assertions, however confident, will take away one tittle from the *evidences* which Revelation affords us, that we are beings destined to immortality. Were the *affirmative* of our argument even less solid than it really is, nothing that the unbeliever can produce to the *contrary* deserves the name of *proof*. The possibility of a future state will still remain a matter incapable of positive refutation: and so long as it thus remains, so long will the mind of man continue full of anxieties and apprehensions, which nothing that his own natural reasonings can supply will entirely remove.

Nor will his solicitude terminate here. Being once convinced that there *may* be another

state of existence, in which happiness or misery will be awarded him according to his conduct in this present life; another question immediately presents itself, how he may avoid the evil and obtain the good, which he must suppose that in that state an all-wise and righteous Governor of the Universe will not fail to dispense? To this end, his next inquiry will be, what is the will of the Creator with respect to the creature whom he hath endowed with these desires and expectations; and how that will may be effectually fulfilled.

To the great question, *what is the will of God*, no one can give a satisfactory answer but God himself, or those to whom God hath revealed it. "*Canst thou by searching find* "*out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty* "*to perfection?*" Neither his nature, his attributes, nor his purposes with respect to mankind, can be so far ascertained, by the light of Nature, as to set him free from the apprehension of falling into dangerous errors. Even the great outlines of *moral duty* can be but *imperfectly* understood, until we know from *authority* what is the will of our Creator; because it is *his* will which makes the service we perform, either to him or to our fellow-creatures, properly an act of *duty*.

Therefore, until we are made acquainted with the relation in which we stand to him; until we are taught what he hath done, or purposeth to do, for us; what service he will accept at our hands, and what consequences are to ensue upon our obedience or disobedience; we cannot be said to know the Divine will, nor can we be assured of obtaining that happiness in a future state, to which we naturally aspire.

But supposing this task accomplished, a more arduous one yet remains. Supposing a perfect rule of conduct towards God and man discovered, and universally agreed upon; who shall be able to *perform* it? who shall *fulfil all righteousness?* Yet on what grounds may hopes be entertained that the full performance of what conscience suggests to be our duty, will be *dispensed with?* Where, again, are the *helps* for human infirmity? Who, under circumstances of acknowledged frailty and imperfection, may claim *reward* even for his best services? Much more, who shall *atone* for his past offences? who shall stand before the judgment-seat of God, either to challenge the *justice* of the Almighty, or to sue with confidence for his *mercy?*

Man's natural reason is unprovided with sufficient answers to these questions. A just

sense of his own insufficiency will make him tremble at the attempt to remove these difficulties, and anxiously inquire whence he may obtain that help which will enable him to "go on his way rejoicing." "Hear, then, "what comfortable words our Saviour Christ "saith, unto all that truly turn to him:— "'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are "heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

With the Scriptures in our hands, we have a ready and satisfactory answer to every reasonable inquiry that can be proposed. The certainty of a *future state* no longer depends upon subtle and curious investigations; but is established on the evidence of that great and incontrovertible fact, *the resurrection of our Lord from the dead.* The *conditions*, on which our happiness in a future state depends, have been expressly declared by those whose wonderful works proved that they were invested with authority to announce the will of God. Respecting the aid that is necessary to enable us to perform that will, we are promised (by him who proved himself to be both able and willing to fulfil his promises) that the Holy Spirit shall "strengthen us "with might in the inner man," and effectually cooperate with us in working out our salvation. Nor are we left to distress-

ing doubts and disquietudes, concerning the means of being *reconciled* to our heavenly Father, when we labour under the consciousness of imperfection and guilt. Here, also, the Gospel speaks peace to our souls. It points to the Cross, and shews us the Redeemer, who made atonement for the offences of all true and faithful penitents, and who now sitteth at the right hand of God, "ever "living to make intercession for us." The *consequences*, also, of embracing or neglecting this great salvation are no less explicitly set forth. To the faithful and obedient are promised such *rewards* "as eye hath not seen, "nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into "the heart of man to conceive." To the obstinate and impenitent are threatened *judgments* no less inconceivable, tribulation and anguish and everlasting exclusion from the presence of God and the happiness of the righteous.

Here, then, every doubt, which our hopes or fears may suggest, is cleared up, leaving nothing to perplex or mislead us. The light of Revelation fully manifests those truths, which by the light of Nature must ever have remained obscure and uncertain. Our Reason, satisfied with the infallible testimony by which they are supported, receives them as

"*faithful sayings:*" and the most powerful feelings of our nature prompt us to embrace them as "*worthy of all acceptation.*" Thus did our Lord prove himself to be "the way, "the truth, and the life:" and every perverse opposition to his doctrine or his precepts may justly be considered as an impeachment of the veracity of God himself.

But if this indeed be so;—if our Lord was in such a sense "the way, the truth, and "the life," that "no man can come to the "Father but by him;"—what shall become of that vast proportion of mankind, in all ages of the world, who never heard of the glad tidings of the Gospel; and of them, also, who, through invincible ignorance or prejudice, have withstood its claims to their acceptance? Must these, however *unintentionally* aliens to the covenant, be excluded from the prospect of mercy? Is there no hope for the virtuous heathen, for the untaught savage, for the misled, but honest, victims of error, brought up and nurtured in the bosom of false religions.

These questions (though they do not immediately concern the believer in Christ) admit of a probable, though but a *conjectural* answer. For, though it be most true, that there is "none other name under heaven given among

"men whereby we must be saved," but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that none can come to the Father but by the way which he hath opened; yet it is by no means improbable that multitudes may be saved through that Name, and by the Redemption he hath wrought, who are wholly unconscious of the blessing, or who labour under some insuperable obstacles to the acknowledgment of its truth.

Our Lord was "the Lamb of God which "taketh away the sins of *the world*." "The "blood of Christ cleanseth from *all* sin." "He is the propitiation for our sins: *and* "*not for ours only, but also for the sins of the* "*whole world*." Declarations so general and comprehensive lead to an encouraging expectation, that the mercies of God through Christ may extend far beyond the circle of those who call upon his name. They intimate, that not only under every previous dispensation of *Revealed* Religion, faith in an expected though unknown Redeemer might ensure acceptance; but that even those on whom the light of Revelation had never shone, may be made, in some degree, partakers of its benefits.

We are not warranted, therefore, in absolutely denying the salvability of the heathen,

before the coming of Christ; nor of those who, since his coming, have, from circumstances uncontrollable by themselves, remained in ignorance or unbelief. Professing our belief in that universality of the Christian redemption which the Scriptures set before us, it would ill become us to decide rashly upon the final destiny of a Pagan, a Jew, a Mahometan, or a Hindoo, trained up in blind and superstitious reverence to systems, from the shackles of which they have not the means of emancipation. How far the *uncovenanted* mercies of God may extend to these, or to any under similar circumstances, it is not for us to decide. The charity that "hopeth and "believeth all things" will incline us to the opinion, that for such as have lived up to the measure of their information, whatever it might be, is reserved some recompense; a recompense, which though not equal, perhaps, in magnitude to that which is designed for higher degrees of knowledge, and proportionate attainments in practice, will yet be adapted to their respective qualifications, and suitable to the measure of equity with which all the Divine proceedings shall unquestionably be administered.

Nevertheless, we reject, with our Church, the impiety of those who "presume to say,

"that every man shall be saved *by the law or* "*sect* which he professeth, so that he be dili- "gent to frame his life according to that law, "and the light of Nature." We reject it, because, whatever be a man's diligence in this respect, it is not *by the law or sect which he professeth*, but *by the mercies of God through Christ*, that his salvation is attainable. The law or sect (whatever it may be) can only shew him what he *believes* to be his duty. It can make no provision for defects in the *performance* of it; nor can it assure to its adherents a *recompense* for their obedience. Therefore, if the result of such obedience, or of such defective performance of duty, be eternal life or salvation, it must be obtained through some *other* channel; it must issue from that Fountain of Mercy which is inexhaustible; from the infinite merits of a Mediator who can supply all defects, and the infinite value of a Sacrifice which can atone for every transgression.

But is not *faith* indispensably necessary, on the part of those who are to partake of the benefits of this redemption? How, then, can they who neither believe in Christ, nor have even heard of him, be included in the number of those who through him shall be saved?

This difficulty can only be obviated by a careful distinction between the *covenanted* and the *uncovenanted* mercies of God. Wherever the will of God is clearly made known, there the declared terms and conditions of acceptance must of necessity be fulfilled. *Faith* is the instrument or means, by which the believer in Christ becomes a partaker of the redemption that is wrought for him. Knowing that this redemption comes through Christ alone, his hope of salvation *without such faith* would involve an absolute solecism. But "*faith* cometh by *hearing*, and hearing by "the *Word of God*." Where that Word has never reached the ear, faith, without a miracle, is altogether unattainable; nor can the terms of the *covenant* be there applied. To persons so circumstanced, no *assurance* of salvation can be given, no *promises*, or *certain expectations* of God's favour, be holden out: yet since their want of faith, or of any other qualification essential to the profession of the Gospel, is not, on their part, a *violation* of the covenant, it were rash to affirm that they shall fall under the same condemnation with *hypocrites* and *apostates*.

Our Lord, indeed, has given an intimation, which may help to a solution of the difficulty. He hath said, the "servant which knew his

"Lord's will, and prepared not himself, nei-
"ther did according to his will, shall be
"beaten with *many* stripes. But he that
"knew not, and did commit things worthy
"of stripes, shall be beaten with *few* stripes.
"For unto whomsoever much is given, of
"him shall be much required: and to whom
"men have committed much, of him they
"will ask the more." Here the equity of the Divine retribution, in the case of *punishment*, is clearly laid down. And why may not an inference hence be drawn as to the similar dealings of the Almighty with mankind, in the distribution of future *rewards;* so that none may have reason, in either case, to arraign the justice of the recompense. Our Lord says again, "In my Father's house are "*many mansions:*" which, though it seems to refer to different stations of dignity or bliss, proportioned to the different degrees of improvement among the *faithful* themselves, may possibly have reference, also, to certain allotments in a future state, for those who, though they knew not the will of God by living under any dispensation of *revealed* religion, yet had not entirely forfeited his favour by their abuse of the inferior portion of light which they enjoyed.

These, however, it must be confessed, are

but conjectural speculations, or, at most, uncertain inferences from suggestions not intended (as it should seem) to impart to us very distinct information. If they suffice to rebut the cavils of the sceptic, or to enhance the inestimable value of the Christian faith, it is well. Farther than this, it would be unwise to press such considerations; which, after all, savour, perhaps, too much of that spirit of needless curiosity, which our Lord reproved, in one of his own disciples, when he said, "*What is that to thee? follow thou me.*"

The scope, indeed, and the intent of all that has been here said, is to impress upon your minds a just sense of the high importance of the Christian faith. In boundless compassion to the whole race of mankind, fallen from that state of purity and innocence for which they were at first created, this dispensation of grace and truth was begun, continued, and ended, in HIM, "Jesus "Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for "ever." At sundry times and in divers manners was this gracious purpose gradually unfolded to mankind. To all who heard and received it, it administered consolation and support. To what extent its benefits may actually have been felt in this life, or may hereafter be enjoyed in the next, it is not

for us to determine. But this we know assuredly;—that, to whatever degree of bliss any of the sons of men shall finally be admitted, they will owe it exclusively to HIM who declared himself to be "the *way*, the "*truth*, and the *life*," and "who of God is "made unto us *wisdom*, and *righteousness*, "and *sanctification*, and *redemption*."

These, however, are at best but doubtful and unnecessary speculations, on which we have no express warrant of Scripture to direct our judgment. But for ourselves, the conclusion is plain and clear. *We* are actual partakers of the *covenant*. By its laws and ordinances, by its promises and threatenings, by its hopes and its terrors, we are indissolubly bound. To *vacate* that covenant on our part, (in other words, to apostatize from this faith, or to renounce its conditions,) is not merely to deprive ourselves of its *benefits*, but to incur its *penalties*. *We* can never, therefore, be placed in the condition of those who, though shut out from the light of Christianity, may be not altogether excluded from the *uncovenanted* mercies of their heavenly Father. In proportion to the privileges we enjoy from our Christian profession, is the danger incurred by their forfeiture: and, whatever sentence may await those who have

"never *known* the way of righteousness," the judgment to be passed on them who, "after "they have known it, *turn from* the holy "commandment delivered unto them," cannot be doubtful. This is the weightiest consideration that can be urged, for perseverance in our Christian calling. It lays the axe to the root of all vain speculations on what may, or may not, be hoped for, independently of the Christian dispensation. To those who enjoy the benefits of that dispensation, nothing can supersede its necessity, nothing can avail without it. Here, then, we may close the discussion. Christ is the Author of eternal salvation to all that *believe* and *obey* him. Of them that believe or obey him *not*, through any unavoidable impediments to the knowledge of him, nothing can be affirmed that is properly applicable to our case. For WE have "the record, that God hath given "unto us eternal life, and that this life is *in* "*his Son*." This profession let us ever "hold "fast, without wavering:" and whenever we are tempted to depart from it, let us adopt the resolution of the faithful Apostle, "Lord, to "*whom* shall we go? THOU hast the words of "eternal life. And we believe and are sure "that thou art that Christ, the Son of the "living God."

SERMON XVI.

MATTH. xi. 5.

The poor have the Gospel preached to them.

IT was one of the prophetical characteristics of the Messiah, that he should "preach good "tidings to the meek," and that "the poor "should eat and be satisfied" with his heavenly doctrine. This part of his office our blessed Saviour appears to have constantly kept in view, and frequently to have pointed it out to the observation of his followers. In the very beginning of his ministry, on entering the synagogue at Nazareth to expound the Scriptures, he found the place in the book of the Prophet Esaias where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, "because he hath anointed me to preach the "gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to "heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliver-"ance to the captives, and recovering of sight "to the blind, to set at liberty them that are "bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the

"Lord." And "he began," says the Evangelist, "to say unto them, This day is this "scripture fulfilled in your ears." Again, when messengers came to him from John the Baptist, with the inquiry, "Art thou he that "should come, or do we look for another?"—he referred to this special description of him by the prophets:—"Go, and shew John again "those things which ye do hear and see: the "blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, "the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, "the dead are raised up, and the poor have "the gospel preached to them."

It has been questioned whether our Lord here spake of the poor in the common acceptation of the term, as denoting them who labour under temporal wants and necessities, or them whom he elsewhere calls "*the poor* "*in spirit*," persons of humble and tractable dispositions, inclined to receive his doctrine with meekness and docility; since to these latter the Gospel was specially addressed, and was preached with greater certainty of success, than to men whose pride of heart and of understanding tended to disqualify them for the acceptance of some of its humiliating truths. But since our Lord, in the passage before us, speaks simply of the poor in general, and not of the poor in spirit in particu-

lar, there is no apparent reason for applying the expression in any other than its ordinary meaning. Nor is it difficult to perceive, that both his doctrine and his demeanour were in this respect strikingly distinguished from what the world had hitherto experienced in any professed teachers of religion.

Before our Lord's coming, the spiritual condition of the poor was, indeed, grievously defective. In heathen countries, the mass of the people appear to have been utterly destitute of religious knowledge. They were never taught how to escape from the tyranny of their lusts and passions, or to render any rational or acceptable service to a Supreme Moral Governor of the universe; but were led to trust in the grossest acts of superstition and idolatry, and to practices the most licentious and detestable, for obtaining the favour of their imaginary deities: what little knowledge of such subjects philosophers of a higher cast gleaned from imperfect tradition, or from their own elaborate reasoning and reflection, was confined, almost entirely, to the limited circle of their own immediate friends and followers, and purposely concealed from the people in general, lest their belief should be shaken in those systems of error and delusion, by which they were ig-

norantly kept in awe, and were more easily subjected to the domination of their unfeeling oppressors. With no rational inducement to purify their hearts and lives: with no patterns set before them of sobriety, righteousness, and holiness; with no lessons of conduct adapted to their own circumstances; and with no well-grounded expectation of a "recompense of reward," to which, in a future state, they might look forward as a deliverance from their present troubles and privations;—the state of the heathen poor presents, for the most part, a picture of moral debasement, little elevated above the brute creation, and scarcely regarded by their superiors as deserving of higher consideration.

Among the *Jews*, the case indeed was different. By the law of Moses, express provision was made for their spiritual as well as temporal exigencies. It enjoined that the commandments of God should be made known to the whole community, and diligently taught to their children and their children's children, throughout all generations. All had an equal participation in spiritual privileges. All were taken into covenant with God, from their earliest infancy, and had the same faith, the same hope, the same interest in the Divine promises. The

Jews were taught that "the poor should "never cease out of their land;" and this being inculcated as the express ordinance of God, the poor learned to submit to it as the Divine will, and the rich to regard them as objects of God's paternal affection, entitled, as children of one common Father, and heirs of one common promise, to their unceasing attention. And such, no doubt, would have been the effect of this benevolent Dispensation, had its spirit and intention been fully entered into by the Jews themselves. But our Lord's severe reproofs of the Scribes and Pharisees, his correction of their fallacious interpretations of many benevolent precepts in the Mosaic Law, and the representations given even by their own historians of the extent of depravity prevalent among them, clearly indicate the general neglect of public instruction, and more especially the debased state of the *poor* among them, as to every thing relating to moral or religious improvement.

To "preach the Gospel," therefore, "to the "poor," to labour for their recovery from sin and error, to render them, through the medium of its precious promises, more elevated in their desires and expectations, and better able to sustain the adversities of this pre-

sent life, was a work which distinguished our blessed Saviour as a benefactor to the human race altogether new and unparalleled in the history of the world. To the multitudes who thronged around him he extended the most compassionate concern; he spake to them as "one having authority," yet with such persuasive mildness, that they "wondered "at his gracious words," no less than at the marvellous works by which that authority was demonstrated and enforced.

Since, then, our Lord hath left us, in all things, "an ensample, that we should follow "his steps," what can be more evident, than that it is our bounden duty steadfastly to keep in view *this* part of his conduct, as the rule and pattern of our own? "By this," says he, "shall all men know that ye are my "disciples, if ye have love one to another:"—and, "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one "of the least of these my brethren, ye have "done it unto me."

The Apostles failed not to inculcate the same benevolent feelings. They exhort us to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil "the law of Christ;" to "condescend to men "of low estate;" to remember that God hath "chosen the poor of this world" to be "rich "in faith, and heirs of the promises." They

shew it to be the purpose of the Gospel to instruct men "both how to be abased, and "how to abound," and to teach them "in "whatsoever state they are, therewith to be "content."

In conformity with these admonitions, the Christian world has, for the most part, exhibited a striking contrast with respect to the condition of the humbler classes of society, to the darkness and depravity of heathen countries. In Christian states, the necessity has generally been acknowledged of training up these, however destitute of other kinds of knowledge, so that they may become "wise "unto salvation."

It is true, indeed, that the baleful influence of papal error and oppression has, wherever it prevailed, cast a shade over this animating scene; and, when at its full height of gigantic power, seemed to threaten the almost total extinction of the light that was intended to be shed upon mankind. The prohibition of the general and unreserved use of the Holy Scriptures by the people, in their own vernacular languages, and the performance of public worship in a tongue not understood by the people, were insuperable obstacles to the general diffusion of religious truth. These innovations were no less cruel to the great

mass of mankind, than they were repugnant to the spirit and the letter of Holy Writ. As the obvious consequence, the lower orders appear, in many countries, to have been reduced to a state of ignorance and barbarism utterly unworthy of the Christian name.

In fulness of time, however, under God's good providence, a large portion of the Christian world was happily released from this deplorable thraldom, by the great work of the Protestant Reformation. Thenceforth, to *all* ranks and conditions of people, lay or spiritual, the Scriptures were laid open, as their common privilege. The poor had the gospel preached to them; they were taught to pray in their own native tongues; they were encouraged to resort to the Sacred Oracles "for "reproof, for correction, for instruction in "righteousness;" they were enjoined to "read, "mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that "by patience and comfort of God's Holy "Word, they might embrace, and ever hold "fast the blessed hope of everlasting life."

In the means provided for thus diffusing the blessings of the Gospel throughout the whole community, our own Church has been eminently conspicuous. The Scriptures are not withholden from any who are capable of using them. A standing ministry is esta-

blished, to preach and to expound their contents. Our Liturgy and Articles contain a rich store of pure Christian doctrine. From these all may derive instruction and edification; all may be guarded against dangerous errors in faith or worship;—advantages, which render even the simplest of its members inexcusable, in any gross departure from Christian duty. Hence, in this country, the spirit of religious improvement has, for the most part, kept pace with the progress of knowledge in general; and the character of the nation raised to a higher pitch, than even by its proudest pretensions in arts or arms. Evidence of this is found in the numerous institutions, munificently supported for religious education, for the dissemination of Christian knowledge by publications adapted to every age and condition of life, by increasing the means of public worship, by foreign missions, by various local and parochial charities, and by circulating the Word of Life through every channel where there can be a hope that it will be profitably applied.

Who, then, can reasonably complain that there is any real want of *evangelical* light in this favoured country? Where is the Christian doctrine, or Christian duty, which is not inculcated, or correctly laid down, in our

Creeds, our Articles, and our Book of Common Prayer? Wherein does our Catechism mislead the youthful learner? Wherein is our administration of the Sacraments corrupt or defective? Or, wherein do our forms of devotion offend against the apostolical rule, to "pray with the spirit, and pray with "the understanding also?"—Or, who will say, that the great body of our parochial clergy, from the Reformation to the present day, have been so ignorant, or so remiss, or so regardless of their solemn vows and engagements, as to preach what is irreconcilable with the very services which they are called upon to perform?

Surely, then, we may venture to affirm, that wherever there is a parish church at hand, *there* is the *gospel* to be found. Its services may be more or less diligently performed; its ministers may be more or less skilful in unfolding its truths; nevertheless, the means of grace are supplied; the Scriptures are read; confessions, supplications, thanksgivings, are offered up; sacraments are duly administered; infants are baptized; the poor are catechized; the more advanced in knowledge are brought to confirmation; the sick are visited; the dead are committed

to the grave with consolatory and edifying devotions. Shall we think lightly of these advantages? Shall we complain that we are in darkness, and must seek elsewhere for light to guide us into the way of peace?

I call your attention to this subject, at the present moment, with reference to a circumstance, of late much pressed upon the notice of the public, that this day, on which we are now assembled, completes the term of 300 years, from the date of the first authorized translation of the Holy Scriptures into the English language. From that auspicious event, we may date the commencement, or the revival at least, of those special spiritual privileges, which we, perhaps, enjoy above all other Christian states. To this, under Providence, we may be said to owe those hopes and assurances which best support us under all the changes and chances of this mortal life, and guide our feet into the way of peace;—peace with ourselves, peace with each other, and peace with God. While the Bible was, in a manner, shut against the people; while its precious truths were locked up as in a sealed book, and only here and there partially opened to them, at the will and pleasure of rulers "holding dominion"

over the flocks committed to them, rather than being "helpers of their joy;" the great mass of the community were almost precluded from becoming "wise unto salvation." But no sooner was the *whole* Sacred Word laid open to their view, and communicated in their own tongue, than it became the shame and the fault of the people themselves, if they did not become "thoroughly "furnished unto all good works."

This blessed work, the translation of the entire volume of the Old and New Testament, was first completed by a distinguished prelate of that time, who, in conjunction with other leading individuals in the Church, laboured to rescue his countrymen from the Papal yoke, and to restore to them those sacred rights, which, in the earliest ages of the Church, *before popery itself was known*, had spread the Gospel far and wide, without restraint, to the infinite joy and benefit of multitudes of Christian saints and martyrs.

Severe, however, was the penalty inflicted upon many of these righteous advocates of the truth, by the adherents of the papal power, for this infringement upon their usurped authority. Every engine of persecution and destruction was put in activity,

to repress this rising spirit of Christianity: and multitudes jeoparded their lives even unto death, in maintaining that privilege of every Christian believer, to have free access to the Waters of Life for his comfort and support. The blessing of God, however, accompanied their efforts, until at length the clouds of error were dispersed, and the Sun of Righteousness again shone forth "with "healing in his wings." Faith in the Redeemer again stood prominent as the main feature of the Gospel. Vain and fantastic objects of worship vanished; the pride of human merit was laid low; Heaven was no longer deemed a prize to be purchased at will by deference to corrupt dispensers of its treasures; but every man was instructed to "work out his own salvation," through faith, repentance, and obedience, as his own personal concern, and resting on his own personal responsibility.

For such benefits God forbid that any of us should be unthankful! God forbid, that we should not hold them fast as our best inheritance, our only sure passport to another and a better world! It is at our peril that we neglect them; it is at our peril that we compromise them for any worldly gains, or

for any delusive hope of obtaining favour from those who heed them not.

A few words will now suffice, to connect these observations with our Lord's declaration in the text.

"The poor have the Gospel preached to them." How strikingly does this verify the saying of Solomon, "The rich and the poor "meet together; the Lord is the maker of "them all." In no instance has this truth been so clearly manifested, as under the Gospel Dispensation. And in no Christian community has it been more prominently brought forward than in our own. Among us, spiritual benefits are common both to rich and poor. We hold, that the soul of the one is as precious in the sight of God, as the soul of the other; and that with HIM is no respect of persons. The Christian pastor knows that a woe is entailed upon him, if he preach not the Gospel as freely, and as fully, to the one as to the other. Nay, his labours will be even more assiduously employed, in bringing to the knowledge of the Truth those who are least capable of attaining to it themselves. Never is Christian charity more attractively exercised, than in thus administering to the spiritual wants of such as are daily and hourly

exposed to perils, against which they must otherwise be unprovided.

Ye, then, who are poor, in the *literal* sense, as respects the good things of this present life, be thankful that ye may become "rich "in faith," and "heirs of the promises" made unto *you*, together with those who move in more elevated stations. Ye, who are "*poor* "*in spirit*," meek, humble, teachable, tractable, trust in that Saviour and Redeemer, who hath declared, that "*yours is the king-* "*dom of heaven*." Ye, who "labour and "are heavy laden" with the burden of your sins, come unto HIM, that ye may "*find rest* "*unto your souls*." Ye, who are beset with the toils and troubles and anxieties of worldly pursuits, learn from the Holy Scriptures to "*cast all your care upon him; for he careth* "*for you*." Ye, who possess advantages of whatever kind, spiritual or temporal, withholden from many of your fellow-Christians, consider the wholesome admonition, "*Be not* "*highminded, but fear*." Ye, who have abundance of earthly possessions, and, careless of consequences, seldom turn your thoughts to any thing beyond them, listen to the awful rebuke passed by Abraham upon the rich man in the parable, "Son, remember that

"thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good "things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; "but now he is comforted, and thou art tor- "mented." All of you, of whatever degree or condition, "high and low, rich and poor, "one with another," "search the Scriptures "daily," for precepts and exhortations adapted to your respective circumstances; "work "out your salvation with fear and trem- "bling;" "give all diligence to make your "calling and election sure;" "fight the good "fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life."

In vain, however, should we call upon you to effect these purposes, were not the Written Word accessible to you all, and the Holy Spirit ready at all times to further your endeavours. Call to mind, then, the wonderful workings of God's providence, in giving the Holy Scriptures "for our learning," and in preserving them to us, from age to age, in almost every variety of language throughout the world. Hold them fast, therefore, and abide by them, as the test of truth, of righteousness, of sanctification, of redemption;—in short, as inestimable treasures, which, whilst they solace and support you here on earth, will finally obtain for you, through the merits of HIM who is "mighty to save"—of Him

who hath obtained for us "treasures in hea-
"ven" which shall never perish or decay, an
inheritance, where there is "fulness of joy,
"and pleasures at God's right hand for ever-
"more."

A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO

THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF LLANDAFF,

AT

THE PRIMARY VISITATION

IN AUGUST MDCCCXXI.

Reverend Brethren,

It gives me great satisfaction, that I am at length enabled to meet the Clergy of my Diocese, in the accustomed mode of Episcopal Visitation. I have long been anxious to discharge this part of my duty. But the course of public events has obliged me to postpone the gratification I now have, to a much later period than I had at first intended.

One advantage, however, has arisen from this unintentional delay, that I come somewhat better informed as to the state of my Diocese, than I could have been in the preceding year. The correspondence I have had

with several of the Parochial Clergy, and the official returns, but lately completed, by the Rural Deans, have put me in possession of much valuable information. And although I still labour under some disadvantages incidental to a Primary Visitation, yet I feel myself not entirely a stranger among you; and I have no reason to doubt of such a favourable reception on your part, as may render our future intercourse mutually satisfactory.

I am happy, indeed, to state, even in this early stage of our acquaintance, that I find myself connected with a body of Clergy generally well affected to our Constitution in Church and State, attentive to their pastoral duties, observant of ecclesiastical discipline, and disposed to receive with kindness my endeavours to maintain that zeal and diligence, that order and decorum, in the discharge of their spiritual functions, without which the clerical character cannot be sustained with dignity or effect. Very few complaints have come to my knowledge of misconduct or neglect; and if in any instance reprehension seemed to be called for, the purpose has been effected rather by amicable than by authoritative interference. Such, I trust, will continue to be the case, among

those whom I shall ever be anxious to attach to me by ties of affection and good-will.

For much of the improved state of ecclesiastical concerns in this Diocese, I am sensible of the obligations I owe to my mmediate Predecessor; whose vigilance and ability were successfully applied to the better regulation of several matters, in which some amendment had become necessary: and it will be no less my inclination than my duty, to carry on to its fullest practicable extent what has been so auspiciously begun.

But, in common with your late Diocesan, I feel particularly indebted to that valuable body of Clergy, the *Rural Deans;* by whose circumstantial inquiries into the state of the parishes placed under their respective superintendence, such full and (I doubt not) faithful representations have been made to me of almost every town, village, and hamlet, as enables me, with comparative ease, to judge what improvements have been already made, or may hereafter be practicable, in points of real importance. Great, too, is the advantage I have derived from their personal and local knowledge, in contending with difficulties which I might otherwise have found insuperable. For the cheerful alacrity, and, in some instances, the laborious exertion, with

which this assistance has been rendered, I am happy thus publicly to express my grateful acknowledgments.

Upon a comparison of the returns made by the Rural Deans to my Predecessor in the year 1817, with those made to me in the years 1819 and 1820, I observe, with pleasure, a manifest and still progressive improvement in several matters of general interest.

The *Churches*, in most parts of the Diocese, including (with some few exceptions) the *Chancels* also, appear to have undergone very considerable repairs. The proportion of those now in decent and respectable condition is nearly as five to one; and of the rest several are stated to be actually under repair. From these circumstances, and from the assurances I have received of the commendable spirit that prevails among those upon whom the charge of their preservation devolves, I have no doubt that every reasonable ground of complaint is in a fair way to be removed.

Your attention, notwithstanding, can hardly fail to have been drawn to one evil, which, though less extensively felt in this Diocese than in most others, is of too great moment to pass unnoticed; I mean, the want, in certain populous districts, of additional accommodation for attendance on Public Worship.

While Meeting-Houses for Dissenters spring up on every side, many of our own flocks are almost driven from Communion with the Established Church by this lamentable deficiency. Great commendation, however, is due to the munificence of the Legislature, and to the indefatigable exertions of the Society for promoting the enlargement and rebuilding of Churches and Chapels; through whose joint exertions considerable progress has already been made towards the removal of this evil, and from whose further labours, when the necessary means shall be supplied, results still more complete may be expected. The Clergy and Laity of such districts may, therefore, *now* be encouraged to come forward and make known their wants; nor ought they to be backward in soliciting individual as well as public contributions, for a purpose in which every member of the community has an interest scarcely less than those persons have who are locally concerned in it. To such efforts I shall always be glad to afford every assistance in my power. In two recent instances[a], exertions of this kind have been successfully made within this Diocese: and, I trust, the time is not far distant, when the good effect of the same laudable

[a] At Pontypool and Caerphilly.

spirit will be manifested in another instance, where the necessity is still more urgent [b].

I wish it were in my power to notice an equally satisfactory prospect as to the improvement and increase of *Glebe-Houses* of residence for the Clergy. But although something has been done, and is still going on, towards the attainment of so desirable an object, the present deficiency in this respect is much to be lamented. More than two-thirds of the livings in this Diocese have no Glebe-House whatever; and of those which have any, a large portion are so mean, and so unimprovable, as to afford but too good a plea for non-residence. I am well aware, that the poverty of the benefices, in most instances, opposes an almost insuperable obstacle to an effective application of the provisions of the Legislature in this respect; since much can neither be done by raising money upon the mortgage of such benefices, nor by the funds of the individual incumbents. It may be hoped, however, that the attention of Parlia-

[b] At Merthyr Tydvil.—Till lately, there has scarcely been accommodation in the Church of this parish for more than one *fortieth* part of the number of inhabitants. By the recent erection of galleries, the number of seats has been nearly doubled; but for a population exceeding eighteen thousand, there is now room for only about nine hundred persons.

ment will, ere long, be again drawn to this subject, and some more efficient measures be adopted for remedying these inconveniencies. In the mean while, I cannot but earnestly press upon your consideration the necessity of availing yourselves of whatever resources you actually possess, for supplying this deplorable defect.

Another point, to which the Reports I have received naturally direct my attention, is the State of the Parochial Schools. And here I have peculiar gratification in adverting to what has already been done towards extending, throughout this Diocese, the benefits of Education upon the principles and plan of the National Society. Incalculable, I am persuaded, are the advantages already felt from the extension of this admirable system; which promises to bring a blessing upon the whole community, by upholding our National Church in its genuine purity, and attaching to it, in the strongest bonds of affection and of interest, that great mass of the people, upon whose good dispositions the strength and welfare of the State essentially depend. It might appear invidious to select any of these schools in particular for special commendation; although some have more immediately fallen under

my own observation, which might be justly holden up as models of excellence. For this they are greatly indebted to the personal superintendence, as well as munificent patronage, of many among the *Laity*, who are zealous in encouraging every design that may promote the real welfare of their country. Aided by such cooperation, it is for you, my Reverend Brethren, to pursue this object to its fullest extent. But, besides promoting these larger Institutions, your labour will be well bestowed in endeavouring to establish in your respective cures those humbler Village Schools, by which *some* portion of instruction may be imparted to every individual of your flock. These it will be in your power to take under your own immediate direction; and by so doing you will contribute more, perhaps, to the general diffusion of pure and sound Religion, than by any other exercise of your pastoral functions. I press this the more earnestly, because it appears to me, that the number of Parochial Schools in this Diocese is somewhat less than might be expected. Upon the best calculation I have been able to form, scarcely more than one-third of the parishes are provided with Schools of any description. And great as the advantages may be of those which ex-

tend to larger districts, I cannot think that they are such as to supersede the utility of these lesser Institutions.

Another topic, to which it is necessary that I should direct your attention, is the evident increase of *Dissenting places of Worship.* Although at present there may be a majority of parishes which have no licensed houses of this description, yet in other parishes they are so disproportionately numerous, that in the aggregate they will probably soon equal, if not outnumber, the sum total of Churches and Chapels under the Establishment. It is true, that this multitude of Dissenting Congregations, when divided and subdivided according to the diversity of doctrine and of discipline professed among them, will exhibit a much smaller proportion of any particular sect or persuasion. But since none of these, however at variance with each other, can be conceived to entertain good will towards us, and since we are solemnly pledged, by our Ordination Vows, to "banish all erroneous "and strange doctrines" from our charge, no vigilance can be too great, no diligence too unremitting, on our part, to counteract this growing evil. This cannot more effectually be done, than by instilling into the minds of all who are committed to our care, and especially

into those of the rising generation, the truly Scriptural views of Religion which our Church sets before them, throughout her Creeds, her Articles, her Catechism, and her Rituals of every description: nor can we hope either to bring back them who have already strayed from the fold, or to retain such as have not yet departed from it, unless we faithfully supply them with such pure and wholesome doctrine as may be drawn from these invaluable sources of instruction.

Having thus touched upon some few topics which seemed to call for more special observation, as connected with the state of this Diocese in particular, I proceed to others, which, though perhaps less locally interesting, can hardly be deemed of less general moment by any individual member of the Clerical Body.

Within the short period that has elapsed since I was appointed to my present official station, much has occurred to mark the character of the times we live in, and to awaken our earnest attention to the duties we are more particularly called upon to discharge. Public occurrences of an extraordinary kind have called into action a great variety of conflicting passions and interests, and have developed views and sentiments among a certain portion of the community, which it is

impossible to contemplate without much solicitude. With events merely political, the ordinary struggles of men coveting wealth, power, or distinction, and looking not beyond their own personal aggrandizement, *we* have, indeed, little concern; nor does it become us officiously to intermeddle with matters of State-Policy, whether external or internal, where no great *moral* or *religious* principles are at stake. But when the very foundations of Piety and Virtue are shaken, *then* it surely behoves us, as the conservators of Religion, and the constituted guardians of public Morals, to put forth our best energies in their defence, and to watch with tenfold zeal and assiduity over those who are entrusted to our care.

It can hardly have escaped the observation of any of us, that for several years past,—even from the commencement of that revolution in a neighbouring country, which, in its desolating progress, uprooted every principle, every sentiment of Religion, of Loyalty, and of Social Order,—an extensive and formidable party in *this* country has been, either openly or covertly, endeavouring to effect among us a similar catastrophe. This disposition has been manifested, even with increased malignity and virulence, since the

cessation of Continental warfare. As if rendered desperate by that blow, which the return of peace and the restoration of legitimate Sovereigns to their thrones had inflicted upon them, the disaffected among us appear to have been doubly impatient to involve their country in all the evils of popular licentiousness and revolutionary phrensy. Experience, moreover, had taught them, that to such nefarious projects the *Religion* of their country presented an insuperable obstacle. So thoroughly have they found it to be interwoven with all our Civil Institutions; so manifestly, have they perceived, is the entire fabric of our Constitution, our Laws, and our Government, upholden by its influence on the public mind; that no reasonable hope could be entertained of subverting the one, without undermining the other. Hence it is, that Infidelity and Disloyalty, Scepticism and Sedition, Blasphemy and Treason, have so invariably coalesced and cooperated in the labours of these infatuated disturbers of mankind. The leaders in these councils know full well that their progress must be slow and uncertain, until the multitude can be brought to mock at religious scruples, and to cast off moral restraints. But let these be once discarded, and their work is sure. Give

the natural man free and unbounded scope; let loose his passions, his appetites, his inordinate affections; teach him to regard the Fear of God as an idle bugbear, and the hope of Futurity as a superstitious dream; —and where is your hold upon his reason, upon his understanding, upon any one feeling of his nature which shall control his evil propensities? From that instant, he is prepared to realize and exemplify in himself whatever the Apostle to the Gentiles has set before us, in the hideous character he pourtrays of the Heathen world, during its last stage of moral depravity.

It is this prominent feature of the present times, which is more immediately the object of *our* concern. In the ordinary results of political warfare we have, indeed, an interest, in common with the rest of our fellow-subjects, and cannot be supposed to view them with indifference. But as our conditions and habits of life, our pursuits and occupations, may be supposed to disqualify us in some measure for taking an active part in them; so does the peculiar sanctity of our profession call upon us rather to withdraw others from unnecessarily or intemperately engaging in them, than to be ourselves partakers in the disputes to which they give occasion. Not

so, however, when we see those over whom it is our duty to keep a watchful eye, heedlessly or perversely putting themselves under the guidance of men who would bereave them of their best hopes in another world, as well as of their truest interest in this;—of men who would teach them to "call evil good, and "good evil, to put darkness for light, and "light for darkness, to put bitter for sweet, "and sweet for bitter."

I wish studiously to avoid *particularising* upon this subject. Agitated as the public mind has been within the last two years by occurrences most painful even in the recollection of them, I would rather pass them over in silence, than awaken any feelings of a party spirit by more explicitly adverting to them. I would also fain indulge the hope, that in scenes so remote as these from the din of public clamour, and from the contamination of moral corruption, less necessity may exist for warnings of this kind. Happy, indeed, is it for the lowly and sequestered peasant, in such times as these, if he hears little of what is stirring in the busier world. Enviable is his lot, if, secluded in his native mountains, and unacquainted with any but his own aboriginal language, the wretched effusions of impiety and sedition daily issuing

from the presses of the metropolis are to him almost, if not altogether, inaccessible. In this respect, many parts of the Principality may have had reason to rejoice in retaining their vernacular tongue, inasmuch as it has afforded them some security, at least, against one of the most pestilent of evils.

But so rapid is the progress of moral infection, so imperceptibly does it insinuate itself into the very heart of the country, and so deadly is its influence, if not promptly counteracted by some effective antidote; that we ought not too confidently to rely upon any seeming security against its approach. But a short time since, there was, indeed, great reason to apprehend that this infection was spreading to a most formidable extent. Disloyalty, contempt of public Justice, deliberate insults heaped upon the Laws and the Religion of the country, threatenings, loud and unreserved, of the overthrow of our most venerable institutions in Church and State, were heard in every direction, and were circulated even in the remotest districts, where (if any where) some retreat from public tumult and disorder might have been expected. Happily, however, much of this disheartening scene is gone by: and that good sense, that plain, unsophisticated moral feeling, which

has been considered as eminently characteristic of our fellow-countrymen, has so far, at least, recovered its tone, as to give good hopes that the disease is not irremediable.

And here again let me congratulate the people of this Diocese, that they have, I trust, a Clergy earnest to afford them, on these, as on other points, good instruction and good example. Your readiness, my Reverend Brethren, to join with me in laying at the foot of the Throne sentiments of unfeigned reverence for our late exemplary Monarch, and of dutiful attachment to the Sovereign who now sways the sceptre, (a Sovereign, evidently solicitous to uphold both the stability of government and the welfare of his people by the same spirit of Justice, of Moderation, and of regard to the Public Good, which distinguished his venerable Sire,) evinced your anxiety to maintain inviolate the sacred inheritance derived from our forefathers, and to avert those impending evils which endangered the safety of the Altar, no less than of the Throne.

But it is not only with such evils as these that we have to contend. Others there are, of less menacing aspect, which the more readily find access to the inmost recesses of the country, and too often meet with a will-

ing acceptance from the uninstructed and unwary.

Against the assaults of Infidelity and Irreligion, it is easier, perhaps, to guard your Flocks, than against the inroads of *Fanaticism*. In the one case, the fair shew of Religion creates a prepossession in its favour: in the other, there is something revolting to the best feelings of our nature. The itinerant Schismatic goes forth armed with the persuasives and the terrors which most powerfully affect the human mind. He gains upon the *credulity* of the ignorant, by marvellous and mysterious tales of preternatural impulse. He works upon their *fears*, by denouncing "wrath, tribulation, and anguish," not "upon every soul of man that doeth evil," but upon every one who cannot be brought to a persuasion that he shall be saved by an absolute decree of the Almighty, without any cooperation of his own. He excites them to a bold and presumptuous *confidence*, by holding out an assurance of Salvation to all who can boast of an experimental conviction of it. Thus the Gospel is presented to the ardent imagination of the believer, as a system independent of duties and personal obligations, addressed to the feelings, rather than to the understandings of men; a work wrought by

Divine and irresistible agency upon machines incapable of frustrating its purpose by any negligence or even perverseness of their own.

It is hardly to be expected, that minds uncultivated and undisciplined by previous instruction of a better kind should be proof against doctrines like these; doctrines, which, while they seem to magnify the Divine Author of our being, tend to diminish our reverence for some of His essential Attributes, and offer at the same time most alluring proposals to the corrupt propensities within us. These opinions too are easily brought down to the level of the meanest capacity; and strange and incongruous as they appear to those who are better versed in Scriptural knowledge, they are even vaunted of, by those who uphold them, as the perfection of Evangelical simplicity.

It is not my design to notice every species of doctrinal error which threatens the peace of the Christian community. But with regret I observe, that in this Diocese, besides numerous congregations of Calvinists, Wesleyans, Independents, and other sects of frequent occurrence, there are found, in the remoter parts of it, some few Socinian or Unitarian places of worship. Were these to meet with much encouragement among the lower

orders, (which I am inclined to believe is not the case,) it would excite a just apprehension that Infidelity itself is gaining ground among us. It is characteristic of Socinianism, that it unduly magnifies the intellectual powers; refusing to extend its belief further than the boundaries of the human understanding. Such a principle as this, adopted by illiterate and uncultivated minds, will hardly stop short of a general disbelief of Revealed Religion; more especially when it comes in contact with that innate propensity, which disposes most men to reject what is unwelcome to their corrupt inclinations, as well as what is incomprehensible to their limited faculties. Nothing, therefore, is more to be deprecated, than the growth of this sect among a class of society, upon whom its influence is likely to be so peculiarly baneful.

But that which cannot but add to our apprehensions, with reference to these various and sometimes conflicting interests among those who dissent from us, is the tendency they all in common have to weaken that hold upon the affections of the people which our Church hath so long and happily maintained. There prevails also among us a false candour, a spurious liberality of sentiment, which inclines many who are not actually hostile to

our Establishment, to regard Religionists of every persuasion as entitled to an almost equal share of our complacency and regard. Hence, popular and captivating associations have been formed, on the acknowledged principle of obliterating every mark of religious distinction; and a bond of union has been proposed, not founded upon harmony of opinions, but on a seeming indifference to tenets in their nature the most discordant and irreconcilable with each other. This specious, but fallacious show of conciliation, is but too well adapted to promote the views of our adversaries, by lessening that respect for our ancient and venerable Church, and that anxiety to preserve its main bulwarks unimpaired, which, under Providence, have hitherto been our best security and defence.

I have touched upon these topics, my Reverend Brethren, as cursorily as might be, chiefly for the purpose of recurring to those points of your professional duty which such meetings as the present are intended more especially to enforce. The remedy for all these evils, the preservative against all these dangers, so far as *we* are personally responsible, will be found in that diligent, faithful, uncompromising, and undeviating discharge of our respective functions, which, while it

must raise us in the estimation of all impartial observers of our conduct, will also lay the best foundation of our own individual satisfaction, and of the general welfare. Even the retired and unobtrusive labours of your profession cannot but greatly advance the public good. But your sphere of usefulness may be more widely extended, by uniting your efforts with others of the Clergy and Laity who are now carrying on, with a zeal and energy proportioned to the exigency of the times, the great works of National Education, and of promoting Christian Knowledge, both at home and abroad. The establishment of Diocesan and District Committees, in union with the Parent Societies instituted for these important purposes, has of late years been successfully adopted throughout this, as well as other parts of the Principality. The contributions, too, which have been raised in your respective parishes, towards the support of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, bespeak a liberal spirit, and an ardent desire of doing good. While this spirit prevails, we need not be dismayed by any efforts of our adversaries. These great public institutions, together with the Society for the enlargement and rebuilding of Churches and Chapels, may be regarded as

main bulwarks of our Ecclesiastical Establishment. They provide for the instruction of the great mass of the community in every way in which it can be administered; by training the infant mind to a knowledge of Christian duty; by supplying the adult with every assistance to a right faith and practice; by providing for the wants of our fellow-countrymen separated from us in distant countries; by scattering the seeds of Christianity in every climate and in every soil; and by affording to those among ourselves, who might otherwise be debarred of such benefits, the means of attendance on the public ministrations of the Church.

With these advantages within their reach, let us hope the time is at hand, when none among us need complain that Evangelical light and truth must be sought elsewhere than within the pale of the Church of England. Not that we would depreciate the good that is done by others, nor regard them with an invidious eye. Towards our Dissenting brethren, intent as many of them undoubtedly are upon promoting in common with ourselves the great purpose for which the Gospel was imparted to mankind, it behoves us to demean ourselves with charity, with good-will, with respect. But while *they*

pursue their course unmolested and unreproved, let it be allowed to *us* to do the same. We concede toleration freely and fully: we claim only to be equally unmolested in our own privileges, and thus to preserve the relations of peace and amity. What more does Christian Charity require? Or what further advances can be made towards an interchange of good offices, without a compromise on one side or the other, or perhaps on both, of sincerity and truth?

Other topics still remain, to which I might solicit your attention. But it is time to draw to a conclusion. I cannot dismiss you, however, without expressing my satisfaction that I have been enabled to obtain, for a while, a place of residence in my Diocese, where I hope henceforth to pass some considerable portion of the year. This will, I trust, afford me opportunities of more frequent intercourse with my Clergy, and bring me better acquainted with those local and personal concerns to which my attention ought to be directed. I hope it is almost needless to add, that I shall readily avail myself of every such opportunity, as well for my own satisfaction as for yours.

With these assurances, I for the present bid you farewell; earnestly imploring the

Divine Blessing upon our mutual endeavours to promote that great purpose for which the Gospel was promulgated to the world and our Great Master lived and died, "GLORY TO "GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, "GOOD WILL TOWARDS MEN."

A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO

THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF DURHAM,

MDCCCXXVII.

Reverend Brethren,

On this my first opportunity of publicly addressing you, I feel that I should ill satisfy either your just expectations or my own sense of duty, were I to omit a passing tribute of respect to departed worth, which cannot but be as much in unison with your sentiments as it is with mine.

The event that occasioned my being placed in the relative situation I now bear to you, deprived this Diocese of one of the most distinguished prelates of our time. It is impossible that you should look back to the period when he presided over you, without mingled emotions of satisfaction and regret.

Highly gifted with natural talents, and those talents highly cultivated and improved; your late revered Diocesan possessed also great advantages of birth and education, valuable acquisitions of extensive literature, and an enlarged acquaintance with mankind. These endowments, united with the best ornaments of the Christian character, unaffected piety and charity, obtained for him a more than ordinary share of general esteem, of veneration, and affection.

The continued operation of such excellent qualities for more than thirty years, has been manifested throughout this Diocese, in the improvement of the condition of the Clergy, in extending the education of the poor, in promoting an increased attendance on public worship, in establishing and supporting many valuable institutions, and in the encouragement of sound learning and exemplary conduct. Not only are there public proofs around us, in every direction, to attest the truth of these remarks; but probably most of those who hear me could bear their personal testimony to the same effect.

You may well conceive, my Reverend Brethren, that I deeply feel both the advantages and the disadvantages of following such a predecessor;—the disadvantages, on

the one hand, of being tried by such a standard;—the advantages, on the other hand, of having such a pattern for my guidance and direction. My encouragement in this respect is moreover greatly heightened by the reception I have already experienced among you, which assures me that my endeavours in so responsible a station will be regarded with all the indulgence that can reasonably be desired.

My connection with such a body of Clergy as I am now addressing, affords me, indeed, confidence of a still higher kind. No Diocese, I may venture to say, contains a larger portion of persons holding benefices and dignities in the Church, whose well-earned claims to such distinction are confirmed by the public voice. No where, I am persuaded, will be found, within the same extent, a greater number of individuals to whom pure religion and sound learning owe the most substantial obligations. Nor, I believe, shall we easily find a portion of our National Church, where, of such individuals, there are so many, either constantly or occasionally, resident upon their cures, and devoting their attention to parochial concerns.

The result is such as might be expected. Glebe-houses, well-conditioned, and propor-

tioned to the value of the benefices, are numerous. Parochial schools abound. Religious and charitable institutions in union with the Church meet with encouragement continually increasing; and the Laity, as well as the Clergy, cooperate in promoting these good designs. In populous and extensive districts, attention has also been drawn to the great want of Church-accommodation for the widely-scattered flocks of some parishes, or the crowded population of others: and in various instances, this evil has been either already much diminished, or measures are put in train for effecting so desirable a purpose at no distant period.

I could dwell with pleasure on these and other auspicious circumstances, well calculated to encourage both you and me in the discharge of our respective duties. But other topics demand our attention; nor may we forget that, although much has been done, much yet remains upon our hands; and that not even the greatest progress that has been made will warrant us in slackening our labours, or sitting down, with folded arms, as if we had only to enjoy the benefit of past exertions. No vigilance, however unintermitting, no exertions, however unwearied, can be expected to render entirely perfect,

that, which under every circumstance, must partake of the alloy of human infirmity. So long, therefore, as any of these great objects remain incomplete in your several cures, so long there remains for you some duty to be discharged, some labour to be encountered. If Schools, if Glebe-houses, if Churches, be still wanting, or defective; if any portion of your flocks still betray ignorance or error, in doctrine, in discipline, or in practice; if any thing be still requisite to relieve the wants, spiritual or temporal, of those who are committed to your charge, no past labours, however meritorious or successful, can supersede the obligation of additional efforts to complete the work of your ministry.

To some few particulars, in which there may possibly still be some room for improvement, I would now more especially call your attention.

The first I would wish to mention, is *the licensing of Curates;*—a regulation too often regarded as of little moment. The omission of it, however, is productive of this inconvenience to the Bishop, that he cannot know with certainty who are the actually officiating Clergy of his Diocese; and consequently cannot exercise that effective superintendence over them, which is one of the most import-

ant functions of his office. To the Parochial Clergy, both Incumbents and Curates, this may also prove a source of disagreement and dissatisfaction; particularly to the latter, who are thus placed out of the protection of the Bishop, should they be subjected to any real grievance. It is attended with this further evil, that it affords facility to the introduction of exceptionable persons into the Diocese, of whose character and qualifications sufficient evidence may be wanting. Even where these evils may not have actually occurred, it is desirable, that whatever has a tendency to produce them should be removed.

Another point on which some observation seems requisite, is the custom of licensing *School-rooms*, or other *unconsecrated* buildings, for the purpose of public worship, in districts remote from the Parish Church, and where the population is too scanty, or too poor, to encourage the building of Chapels of Ease, or to support a Minister for regular and continued service. In some special cases this may perhaps be, at present, the only practicable expedient for supplying the spiritual wants of the people. But that it is, in some respects, an evil, can hardly be denied. Places of religious resort so little consonant

with the solemnity of the purpose tend, if not to create irreverence for religion itself, yet to diminish that respect for the Established Church, which, I am willing to believe, is still among the people at large a predominant feeling. Moreover, whilst buildings of this kind are probably, for the most part, very inadequate to the wants they are intended to supply; their effect, if multiplied, may be to damp and repress that laudable ardour, which has of late shewn itself, in making far more efficient provision for those wants, and in a manner more accordant with the dignity of the purpose itself. I wish it therefore to be understood, that although I may for a while refrain from entirely prohibiting these somewhat unseemly expedients, I am very desirous of seeing them rendered altogether unnecessary, by increased efforts to erect and endow a sufficient number of regular Chapels of Ease; nor shall my best endeavours be wanting, to aid and encourage every proposal of this kind, which may hold out a reasonable hope of success.

The point to which I would next advert, relates to the admission of Candidates for Holy Orders.

It is well known, that the wants of this and other remote Dioceses cannot fully be

supplied from our Universities. It has therefore been usual to admit, upon due examination, literate persons, without restriction as to the places where they may have received their previous education. There are objections to this practice, which nothing but urgent necessity can justify us in disregarding. To obviate its inconveniences, some few local institutions have of late years been established. These, being placed under competent ecclesiastical regulation and supervision, have proved to be well deserving of encouragement. In the principality of Wales the experiment has been made with good effect; and in the Diocese of St. David's in particular, it is now about to be tried upon a larger scale, in an establishment which offers to the students many of the peculiar advantages of academical discipline.

In the North of England, one institution only of this kind has yet been established, that of St. Bees in Cumberland. Of this I can say with confidence, that it is conducted on sound theological principles, and does great credit to the excellent Clergyman to whose management it is confided. It is moreover on a sufficiently large scale, to render it probable that an adequate supply may be obtained from it for this Diocese, as well as

for those with which it is more locally connected.

Conceiving it, therefore, to be exceedingly desirable that an establishment so well adapted to uphold the reputation and the stability of our Church should meet with all due encouragement, it is my intention to look to this institution of St. Bees for a supply of such Candidates for Holy Orders as have not had the benefit of an University education. To this rule, with as few exceptions as possible, I purpose to adhere; not intending offence to those who may be excluded by it, however in other respects admissible; but thinking it expedient, in a matter of such high importance, to establish some fixed and determinate regulation, which, while it affords the best prospect of a satisfactory result, may also hereafter prevent disappointment to those who contemplate admission into the sacred ministry.

There is yet another topic, not unconnected with this subject, which I cannot pass wholly unnoticed.

A practice, there is reason to believe, has been lately gaining ground in this, as in other Dioceses, of giving Titles for Orders on private agreements between the parties, substantially different from those which come

before the Bishop. Persons anxious to obtain Orders may sometimes be willing to undertake a cure for little or no present remuneration; and an incumbent may be glad to accede to such terms. But the agreement being kept secret from the Bishop, both the nomination and the license go forth at variance with the transaction itself. To say nothing of the deception in this case practised upon the Diocesan, (who certainly is not the least responsible of the parties,) an opening may thus be made for unworthy persons to attempt admission into holy offices; and that, by a species of contract, which, though not, legally speaking, simoniacal, yet partakes somewhat of that character, and is, in every point of view, much to be deprecated.

Unquestionably, there may be cases in which the Incumbent who needs a Curate can ill afford a sufficient remuneration, while the individual who seeks the Curacy can well afford to accept an inadequate stipend. In such cases, the Diocesan may be willing, where the law permits, to apportion the stipend accordingly. The law, however, is in most instances too imperative to admit of much relaxation in that respect: and even where it can be relaxed, caution is especially requisite in the nomination to a Curacy as a

title for Orders, which, it was always intended, should afford something like a competent maintenance to the person to be ordained. But, whatever be the circumstances, the Bishop may justly require, that they should be fully and fairly laid before him; that the whole should be an ingenuous and *bona fide* transaction; and that his decision, as notified in the license, be considered binding on both parties: nor can harshness be reasonably imputed to him, if, upon discovering any collusion between them, effective measures be taken to prevent a repetition of it.

I proceed now to topics of more general interest, though such as the Clergy may be supposed to contemplate with more than ordinary solicitude.

An attentive observer of passing events can hardly fail to perceive, in the present times, an increasing indifference towards ancient institutions, and a disposition to make *experiments*, in matters relating to Church and State, rather than to be guided by *experience*. Under the plausible appearance of new discoveries in civil and religious polity, and of more enlarged and enlightened views of both, than have been hitherto taken, even by the wisest of our predecessors; a sort of warfare is now waged with *established* opinions, chiefly

(as it seems) *because they are established*, and because, having originated in earlier times, they are now (as it is contended) become unfit for a more advanced period of society.

Upon the effect of this spirit, as influencing merely *political* concerns, I hazard no observations. But so far as it operates upon what *we* are bound to uphold, as responsible Ministers of the Church, it were a dereliction of duty not to be observant of the dangers that surround us.

A more distinct view of these dangers than we might otherwise so clearly apprehend, is sometimes almost forced upon us by our opponents themselves; who, however at variance with each other on many essential points, declare their readiness to suspend, for a time, their mutual disagreements, that they may more successfully cooperate in one common purpose, that of obtaining for every religious persuasion an entire equality of immunities and privileges, and, consequently, raising every religious sect and party to a level with the Established Church.

That this is no exaggerated statement, I think, is obvious. In times past, dissentients from our Establishment were wont to sue for simple *toleration*. Objections were not raised to granting *ascendancy* to the esta-

blished mode of religion. But *now* a very different language is held. *Toleration* is deemed an insult. *Ascendancy* is proscribed, as usurpation and oppression. No favours, no privileges, no advantages, it is discovered, can equitably be allowed to the Church itself, which are not granted to every other religious community.

It is true, that such extreme notions are by no means *universally* entertained, even among the most strenuous assertors of religious liberty; many of whom are too candid and too discerning not to see how directly they tend to general disorganization and confusion. But the principle, in its fullest extent, has been avowed in many recent petitions to both Houses of Parliament; and in both Houses it has met with uncompromising advocates.

This, however, is *open* warfare; less to be feared, perhaps, than insidious and covert hostility. That which we have most reason to regard with jealous apprehension, is the insinuating pretext of amity and good-will, where it is manifest that no real approximation in principle can take place, but at the cost of sincerity and plaindealing.

Far be it from us, who are taught that we

should *have our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace*, to foment discord and rancour on account of diversity in religious opinions. Far is it from my own inclination, to interpose an obstacle to the full interchange of good offices and kindly feelings between persons of every religious denomination. Every honest man of one persuasion may respect honest men of other persuasions; and where that respect is mutually felt, the best foundation is laid for mutual forbearance.

But when we are called upon to break down the very fences and bulwarks of our Establishment, in proof of our good-will, this is asking, not merely for amity and forbearance, but for favour and encouragement. It is to forget that the very same sincerity which inclines *us* to uphold our opinions and to inculcate them upon others, must in reason be supposed to incline persons of contrary persuasions to do the same. To justify us in demurring to such a proposal, we assume only that *they* are as sincere as *we* are; and we thence infer, that *ascendancy* is probably *their* object, no less than *ours*. In this, I can perceive no want of candour or of charity. It is putting both parties on the same foot-

ing of conscientious principle, and requiring only a mutual acknowledgment of each other's consistency and integrity.

Much, however, has been said, and invidiously said, not only of the undue ascendancy of our Established Church, compared with other religious bodies, but of the undue *influence of the Clergy* over the rest of the community.

But what is this influence? and how does it operate to the detriment of any part of the community? Compare our Ecclesiastical Establishment, in this respect, notwithstanding all the advantages derived to it from the favour of the State, with other religious bodies possessing no such advantages. See the priest of the Church of Rome going forth among his people, armed with spiritual terrors and persuasives of every description; calling them, on pain of eternal perdition, to a confession of every thought, word, and deed; enjoining, on the one hand, the most rigid penance and mortification; offering, on the other hand, pardons, indulgences, and absolutions; and withholding or inflicting either of these, at his own option and discretion. What control can the Clergy of our Church assume over the hearts and consciences of the Laity, bearing any resemblance to the effect of such en-

gines as these of intimidation or persuasion? Again; look at the systematic organization of some of our most popular sects, and see with what ingenuity it ensures an entire subjection of the people to those who exercise authority over them, far exceeding what the highest discipline of our Church would warrant.

What, then, is the real influence complained of? Unquestionably, there *is* an influence resulting from the alliance of the Church with the State, which the Clergy do and ought to possess, for the better discharge of their most important duties. A religious establishment *without an ascendancy* is a solecism in terms. The very act of establishing any specific mode of religion, in preference to others, implies that it is to have distinction and preeminence. It implies also, that it is to be invested with a character of permanency and indelibility. Having been deliberately approved and adopted by the State, these adjuncts follow, as necessary to give additional weight to its ministrations, and to raise it in the public estimation.

The influence of such advantages cannot but be considerable; but in no respect do they operate compulsorily or oppressively upon society; nor do they entrench in any

way upon the religious liberties of the community at large. The Church has not the power of interposing to disturb the toleration allowed by the State even to those who are most diametrically opposed to her in doctrine and discipline. She pretends not to any interference with those who refuse communion with her. Even over her own members her control is very limited, and entirely subject to the legislative and executive authorities of the country. The Prelate exercises no authority over the Pastor, but under a strict responsibility to the laws by which it is regulated and defined. The Pastor can exercise none over his flock, without being amenable to those laws for every undue assumption of power. His chief power, indeed, is that of persuasion, exhortation, or admonition; his main influence, that of character and reputation. Not a single weapon, temporal or spiritual, can he with impunity wield, to the injury of those committed to his charge.

If this were all that could be alleged in our behalf, it should suffice to disarm ill-will. But, in truth, the Church of England is itself among the best bulwarks of *religious liberty*. If there be any faith in the page of history, we may fearlessly assert this, and challenge the opponent to disprove it. It

has rescued our country, at one period, from papal domination, and, at another, from the yoke, scarcely less galling, of sectarian usurpation. In both instances it was hailed, not merely by its own members, but by those of almost every communion, as the deliverer of all from thraldom and oppression, and as the only authority under which all might repose in peace and safety. So clear and indubitable are the proofs of this, confirmed moreover by the experience of almost three centuries, as to warrant us in predicting that whatever shall tend to lessen its preponderating influence in the State, will so far tend to diminish that general security and freedom which members of every religious denomination now enjoy under its benignant auspices. Yet are there those among us, who would fain liken the voice of the Church of England to the thunders of the Vatican, and the prerogatives of our Clergy to the domineering spirit of the Romish priesthood. As if our Reformers had done nothing to shake off the papal yoke, or had substituted for it something equally insupportable, loud and urgent are the calls for such further measures, as would, if not actually destroy our alliance with the State, render it impotent and of no avail.

How, then, shall the dangers with which we are thus menaced, be, on our part, most effectually encountered?

Next to your fervent supplications to the throne of grace, and a firm reliance on that Providence which has so often averted from our Church perils the most imminent, let me exhort you, my Reverend Brethren, to put your adversaries to rebuke, by such well-regulated zeal, and such irreprehensible conduct, as shall render ineffectual any efforts to deprive you of that strong hold in public opinion, which will be a shield against a host of foes. An assiduous discharge of all your pastoral duties is indispensably requisite; not only such as relate to the public ritual of the Church, and your discourses from the pulpit; but also the visiting of the sick, the instruction of the ignorant, the consolation of the afflicted, the relief of the necessitous, and the education of the children of the poor in the principles of our Established Church. Your labours in these respects will be greatly facilitated by enrolling yourselves as members of those venerable societies, which, framed on the pure principles of our Church, and conducted under its immediate auspices, have long been successfully occupied in promoting these and other laudable purposes: and your

union with them will at the same time best evince your adherence to that system of church-membership, which both gives additional weight and respectability to the pastoral office, and affords, under Providence, the best possible security, that no evil shall accrue from your well-intentioned efforts. But, above all, will be requisite, such unintermitting caution and vigilance with respect to your own personal demeanour, in the various concerns of social and domestic life, and in the daily and hourly habits which form individual character, as may render you, if possible, invulnerable even to malignity itself.

By attention to these general rules of conduct, many, I am persuaded, among the humblest of God's faithful Ministers, are, at this moment, doing much to strengthen the hands of the Church, and to discomfit its adversaries. It may be given to few to stand prominent in the field of warfare, to engage in individual conflict, and to gather trophies of success. But all are, more or less, advancing the general cause, by remaining steadfastly each at his post, and unobtrusively discharging the duties assigned to him. By persevering in this course, you will also best ensure to yourselves a fair portion of public favour.

So long as the Laity see that you are thus intent upon your duty, and that you are pursuing the course appointed to you upon higher principles than worldly interest or self-importance, you will command respect and esteem even from those who differ from you, as well as from those who accept your ministrations.

Be assured, too, my Brethren, that the Clerical character is becoming daily better understood among us, and more correctly estimated. The rapid progress of education, in all its branches, has introduced into every rank of society such accessions of general information, that a Clergyman will find himself less able than heretofore to maintain the credit due to his station, if his attainments fall short of what may reasonably be expected. If his office as a Parish Priest entitle him to respect, let him remember that it subjects him also to a severer scrutiny; and that where any requisite qualification is notoriously wanting, it is not all the weight of assumed authority that will cover the defect. Public esteem is guided by other rules. It is not to be extorted by arbitrary mandates. It results from opinion, from observation, from comparison, from those mixed feelings and sentiments which, however they may

occasionally err, afford, upon the whole, a pretty accurate criterion of real desert.

But it is time to close these reflections. The inference from them all is briefly this: —that our conduct should exhibit firmness, tempered by moderation; a zeal according to knowledge; vigilance, untainted by mean suspicion; courtesy, not degenerating into feeble compliance; ingenuousness, free from offence, yet incapable of being misunderstood:—in short, that we adopt, as a golden rule, that comprehensive exhortation of the Apostle, "*In malice be ye children, but in un-*
"*derstanding be men.*"

A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO

THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF DURHAM,

MDCCCXXXI.

Reverend Brethren,

SINCE we met together at my primary Visitation, public events of deep interest have passed before us in such rapid succession, that it is difficult to fix our thoughts upon subjects which more immediately belong to our own profession. The ordinary occupations of the Clergy, whether in the humbler or higher stations of the Church, whether in comparative seclusion from the world or in its more active scenes, have been, and still are, interrupted and disturbed by the din of political strife, intruding, more or less, upon every class of society with its almost incessant annoyance.

That we ourselves should be indifferent to such circumstances, cannot be expected. Not only do we necessarily partake with the rest of the community in all the interests and concerns of social life; but the direct object of our professional labours is materially affected by occurrences which strongly agitate the public mind. In proportion as these take possession of the thoughts and affections of men, spiritual objects lose much of their attraction; and the good resulting from the part WE are specially ordained to perform is perceptibly diminished. The voice of the Shepherd almost ceases to be heard by the distracted flock; his admonitions are unheeded, and his efforts to reclaim them to a sense of their highest duties and obligations, most grievously paralysed.

To trace the sources of these evils, and to consider the best means of counteracting them, cannot but be to us, my Reverend Brethren, an object of intense anxiety; and you may reasonably expect that I should not withhold my sentiments from you at such a crisis. But there is first a duty for me to discharge, far more congenial to my inclinations, in adverting to circumstances of local interest, and on which there is little danger of encountering collision of opinion.

Viewing, indeed, the present critical situation of the Church at large, I congratulate myself on being able to observe, that this Diocese continues to present to the public eye an example of ecclesiastical conduct, well deserving the good opinion of the community. Whatever of commendation in this respect I felt it my duty to express on a former occasion, I feel myself no less called upon, and with increased satisfaction, to repeat at the present moment. On the points to which I then directed your attention, my wishes have been met, with a readiness and alacrity demanding my warmest acknowledgments: and that a general spirit of improvement has been manifested among you, rising with the exigencies of the times, the following returns, recently made to me, will amply attest.

Of Schools, since my accession to this See, twenty-seven new ones have been added, and eighty-five united to the National Society. Of Glebe-Houses, four new ones have been added, four rebuilt or considerably enlarged, and three more are proposed to be built. Of Churches or Chapels, fourteen have been built, or are building: thirteen rebuilt, or greatly altered and enlarged; eight are now in progress, or proposed; nine have been newly endowed; and twelve or more have

been augmented. Of Parishes, seven have been divided, or are to be so; and districts are allotted to three others. The Committees of the Societies for Promoting Christian Knowledge and for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts continue to act, throughout the Diocese, with more or less efficiency; and, on the whole, are in a flourishing state. The Church-Building Society, more recently established in the Diocese, has been useful to the full extent of its means, though its supplies are not yet adequate to the demands.

On the subject, however, of Places of Worship in communion with the Established Church, I would mention the still great and increasing want of them in the *mining* districts; where, for the most part, there is no provision of the kind, sufficient to insure to the multitudes belonging to them those spiritual ministrations, without which there is danger of almost all sense of Religion being either lost or perverted. It has been suggested to me, that *auxiliary Chapels*, similar to those in ancient times called *Oratories*, might be opened in these districts; to be licensed on the nomination of the parochial Clergyman, and placed under his superintendence, subject to such regulations as the

Bishop may approve, and to be duly visited by his authority;—the buildings to be of the simplest kind, consistently with what is befitting their sacred character, and to be set apart exclusively for the Church-of-England service;—satisfactory assurance to be also given for the continuance of such service, and for an adequate remuneration to the Officiating Minister. Where *new* Collieries are opened, some provision of this kind might perhaps easily be arranged between the Proprietors and the Lessees. Possibly, too, the system might be extended to other large or scattered populations, especially where there are ancient Chapels, in distant townships, now gone to decay. These, however, may be matters for further consideration. I mention them now, as fit subjects to engage the attention of my Clergy; and with a hope, that, through their inquiry and recommendation, some such plans may be brought into successful operation.

It is unnecessary to occupy you further at present with details of this description. Enough may appear, from this summary statement, to prove the zeal and activity of those who are engaged in the spiritual concerns of this Diocese; and while I would cheerfully and gratefully acknowledge the

co-operation of many of the *Laity* in these laudable exertions, I cannot doubt that they will readily join with me in doing justice to those exemplary Pastors, who, as diligent labourers, spare no pains to "sow and plant and water;" trusting to God to "give the "increase," and to bless their ministry with a plenteous return. It is well also to bear these things in mind for our special encouragement, in contemplating (as we are now called upon to contemplate) the dangers and difficulties which beset our path, the conflict we have to sustain with enmity and opposition of no ordinary kind. To these, however unwelcome the task, I must now draw your attention, as briefly as subjects so momentous may permit.

Eventful indeed has been the period of the last four years, with respect to occurrences deeply affecting the interests of Religion, as identified with those of our National Church. Those great legislative measures, the repeal of a portion of the Test laws, and the admission of members of the Romish Church to the highest legislative and executive functions in the State, wrought such an essential alteration in the principles of our Constitution established at the Revolution in 1688, that it was easy to foresee, at

no distant period, a call for further innovations. Those measures, however, it is not now my intention to discuss; lest I should revive the animosities and exasperations to which they could not but give occasion, and which may never, perhaps, be entirely extinguished. The part which my own sense of public duty led me to take at that period, is probably known to almost all who hear me; and it has afforded me great satisfaction that the course I then pursued drew, from a large portion of my Clergy, testimonies of approbation and of affectionate regard, which I shall ever cherish with grateful recollection. Would that I were able, with equal satisfaction, to advert to the result of those measures; that I were able to congratulate you, my Reverend Brethren, and the Laity around me, upon the happy issue of those departures from the ancient policy of our forefathers, for which almost the only acknowledged motive was the expectation of their healing effects, the anticipation that they would terminate long-existing feuds and jealousies, and prepare for us those halcyon days, when generosity on the one side, and gratitude on the other, should have wrought conciliation and harmony throughout the United Kingdom. I stop not to inquire how far these expecta-

tions have been realized; or whether greater evils might or might not have ensued from a different course of proceeding. It could answer no good purpose to provoke those criminations and recriminations which never fail to break forth, when past transactions are tried by the ordeal of any unfavourable consequences they seem to have produced. Far better is it, for the peace of the community, and for its future welfare, that such things should be left to the historian hereafter to dilate upon, with a cooler judgment and a more impartial spirit than can be expected from contemporary observers.

Yet, while we would thus fain bury the past in oblivion, can we shut our eyes to the existing dangers which beset us, from whatever cause they may have arisen? Can we look around, and see Infidelity and Atheism on one side, Fanaticism on another; Popery advancing in this direction, Socinianism in that; Dissent, Lukewarmness, Apathy, each with multitudes in its train; without perceiving such an accession of strength to our adversaries as none of the present generation, at least, have ever before witnessed? To exaggerate these evils, or to oppress the friends of Religion and Social Order with excessive apprehensions of danger, can never

be the policy of considerate men. But neither are we justified in saying "Peace, peace, when there is no peace;" or in holding out illusory representations, which every discerning observer must perceive to be unfounded. Rather let us, as dispassionately as may be, endeavour to take such a view of our difficulties and dangers, of our duties and obligations, of our supposed imperfections and our means of improvement, as may enable us to form a correct judgment of our actual position, and the course it requires us to adopt.

The Church of England never, perhaps, hitherto has had to contend with so great a number of *open* and *avowed* enemies; who, in their reiterated and persevering attacks, stop short of no misrepresentations, however flagrant, which tend to hold it up to public scorn and indignation. To speak of these as merely exaggerated statements, would be to characterise them much too faintly. They carry with them, in general, so little of the semblance of truth or candour, as to make it hardly possible to acquit their fabricators of intentional deception. Nor would it be necessary to attempt to refute them, were there not multitudes who have no access to better information, and who may be induced to join in the outcry, from a persuasion that asser-

tions so confident could not be hazarded, unless they rested upon some solid ground.

1. Respecting the *revenues* of the Church, statements have gone forth, from one end of the kingdom to the other, so monstrous, as to make it incredible that any inquiry can have been instituted into their authenticity, or that accuracy has even been sought for or desired. *Entire* accuracy we do not, indeed, expect from superficial inquirers, whether well or ill-intentioned; nor ought we to visit too harshly mistakes which arise from mere perfunctory investigation. But when not only the aggregate revenues of the Church are calculated upon no verified *data*, but the value of particular benefices or dignities is doubled, trebled, or quadrupled, for the evident purpose of exciting envy, rapacity, and spoliation; what is to be expected from such declaimers, but every species of aggravated injustice? Yet the difficulty of combating charges so vague and indefinite, is manifest. To expose their fallacy, lengthened and circumstantial details may be sometimes necessary, which the assailant well knows it is almost impossible to array against him; and he shelters himself under *generalities*, secure, as he trusts, against detection. None are better aware of these advantages on the one

side, and disadvantages on the other, than those who engage in this kind of warfare. In repelling, therefore, *assertions* so confident and unqualified, we might almost be content to oppose to them equally confident and unqualified *contradictions;* trusting to the weight of information and authority on the one side, as at least equivalent to that on the other. But the time, let us hope, is not far distant, when opportunity may be afforded of producing such authentic and unimpeachable evidence on this, as well as on other points affecting the character and condition of the Church, as, if it do not restrain the calumnies of the wicked, or "put to si-"lence the ignorance of foolish men," may yet satisfy the honest, the considerate, and the well-disposed portion of the community, of our claims to protection against these unmerited and unprovoked attacks.

Of these attacks, however, none, perhaps, are adapted to make a deeper impression upon the public mind, than the reiterated calls for a more *equal* distribution of the Church Revenues; whether intending an entire and absolute equalization, or such a curtailment only of the wealthier benefices, as might create a fund for raising the poorer to a competent provision for each Incumbent.

Upon this point, it has often been proved, almost to demonstration, that were the principle of *entire* equalization adopted, there could not, under the existing circumstances of our Church, be even such a competency obtained for each benefice as the proposal itself must be supposed to contemplate. Impoverish the larger benefices to the utmost extent that they would bear; and there will yet not be sufficient (supposing pluralities altogether abolished) to support the whole body of the Clergy in a manner befitting their station in the community; even putting aside all reference to those important distinctions and gradations of ecclesiastical rank, which, so long as they are permitted to continue, ought to be provided for on a proportionate scale.

This leads me, however, to observe, that it is but a contracted and very imperfect view of the subject, which looks only to a bare competency for the Clergy in general, regardless of those more ample provisions which support the different stations of the Church, as they now exist. So long as the *Body Politic* consists of various ranks and degrees of men, and exhibits various inequalities of wealth and influence, and is even found most to prosper where these take root and flou-

rish ;—so long will it be found requisite, that the diffusion of *Religion*, throughout the entire mass of the community, should be provided for by a system of Polity somewhat analogous to the existing distinctions in civil life. To ensure to Religion access, upon equal terms, to the highest as well as to the middling and lower classes, means must be found to place a certain portion of its teachers upon such a footing as may give their ministrations due weight and influence, where otherwise they might be coldly and superciliously received. Applying this maxim to the Civil Constitution which it is *our* lot to enjoy, it cannot but be deemed desirable, that from the cottage to the throne, including all the intermediate stations between them, there should be provided those, who not only from personal talent and worth, but from external circumstances also, are qualified, in their respective charges, unreservedly to "speak forth "the words of truth and soberness;" even before rulers and princes, to "reason of right-"eousness, temperance, and a judgment to "come;" to vindicate the Bible and its essential truths against scoffers and sceptics, high or low; and with fearless freedom, and the commanding voice of authority "from above," to inculcate upon ALL, on whatever eminence

exalted, or to whatever condition abased, those doctrines and those precepts, to which ALL are alike under an obligation to bow and obey. This, whether or not it be the actual origin of the existing inequality of rank and opulence in our Church, may be considered as, at least, tending to prove, that, in its mingled diversity of parts and bearings, it is far better fitted to the civil polity to which it is attached, than any of the devices which superficial theorists are disposed to substitute in its stead.

But, admitting this, it may be asked, Where is the necessity for *so great a disparity* of wealth as the present state of our Establishment presents; and might not some *approximation* to an equal allotment prove more salutary in its effects, as well as more seemly in appearance?

Whether any substantial or extensive benefit would result to the community at large from such an attempt, is still problematical; and the experiment may be attended with difficulties not generally taken into consideration. As far as concerns the *unbeneficed* Clergy, who can only be received as *stipendiaries* in the Church, this point has not unfrequently engaged the attention of the Legislature, for the purpose of proportioning

their remunerations to the value of the livings, and the labour of the cures. If these be found inadequate, they are still open to revision by the same authority, for the purpose of rendering them more unexceptionable: and so long as due regard is had to the relative conditions of the parties, no principle is violated, nor any reasonable ground of complaint afforded. But with respect to a proposed increase of small *benefices* by a diminution of large ones, the case is wholly different. To any *compulsory* provisions of this kind, there lies an objection, in point of principle, as well as of practicability. For if a wealthy beneficiary is to be curtailed of his property, merely because he is supposed to be more wealthy than he need be, or because another is less so than he ought to be; it is not easy to explain why this very same rule might not be applied to *other* interests than those of the *ecclesiastical* body; so as eventually to undermine the basis of all property whatsoever.

But though *compulsory* legislation to this effect might soon lead to actual spoliation, and that to an extent not at all contemplated by many of its promoters; yet it is not to be denied, that every encouragement ought to be given, and every authoritative sanction

afforded, to the lessening of the evil complained of, by such *voluntary* acts of endowment, or augmentation, as the case may reasonably admit. Instances are not wanting of a disposition to do this, both among the Clergy and the Laity. Hitherto, however, sufficient legal facilities have not been afforded, to carry it extensively into effect. You will have learned, therefore, with satisfaction, that a Bill is now pending, in Parliament, to empower Bishops, Deans and Chapters, Impropriators, and Parochial Incumbents, to act more advantageously upon such liberal intentions, by removing several obstacles which heretofore have checked their operation.

It is of much importance, that the attention of the Legislature has been called to so desirable an object. That there will be manifested also, on the part of the wealthier Clergy themselves, a feeling correspondent with that of the excellent Primate of our Church by whom this measure has been introduced, I entertain no doubt: and I feel warranted in this expectation, from my own knowledge of some distinguished ecclesiastical Bodies with whom I have been personally connected. It is but justice, indeed, to those much-calumniated Bodies, the Deans and Chapters of Cathedrals, to mention their

general practice of laying apart some considerable portion of their revenues, for the augmentation of small Livings in their patronage, and for improving the condition of the Clergy belonging to them in various ways. Of the Chapter of Durham, in particular, I am enabled to state, that much has been done, and is still doing, to expedite the progress of such improvements. Those livings in their patronage, which are not held in plurality, are already advanced to 150*l.* a year, and still further augmentations are taking place. Livings have been separated, which before were united, and Glebe Houses provided for each. Schools are largely aided. Annual sums are appropriated to the gratuitous education of the sons of Clergymen, and to the endowing of Exhibitioners at our Universities. In union with the other opulent Clergy of the Diocese, an Assurance Fund has also been established, for the benefit of their clerical Brethren of scantier means, upon terms so advantageous that few will be unable to avail themselves of it; the Fund itself paying the whole of the premium and expenses for the first year, and half of the premium in subsequent years. These acts of well-judged beneficence, together with liberal contributions to charitable designs of almost

every description, prove that no inconsiderable portion of their revenues, however ample, circulates throughout the country from which they are drawn; nor is it easy to conceive that the same property, in any other hands, could be more productive of benefit to the community[a].

2. From complaints of the unequal distribution of the revenues of the Church, the transition is obvious to those which are levelled against *Pluralities* and *Non-resi-*

[a] Since this Charge was delivered, (the matter being then in contemplation only,) the Dean and Chapter of Durham have determined upon establishing, at Durham, an Academical Institution, for the purpose of affording to the public, and to the Northern Counties in particular, the advantages of an *University Education.* The particulars of the plan will probably soon be more fully made known. At present, it may be sufficient to state, that it is intended to be formed in immediate connection with the Chapter, as the governing Body; with a Principal, Professors, Lecturers, Tutors, Endowments for Students, and such other provisions as may be found expedient. The want of such an Establishment in the North of England has long been felt; nor could an Institution of this kind come forth under better auspices, or where greater facilities exist for carrying it into effect. A design so public-spirited and munificent reflects the highest credit upon the distinguished Body with whom it has originated: and it can scarcely be necessary to add, that I am prepared to cooperate with them in this noble undertaking to the utmost of my power, and in any way by which my station in this Diocese may enable to promote its object.

dence; which are no less vehemently assailed, as bringing grievous scandal upon our ecclesiastical Establishment.

Abstractedly, it may not be easy to vindicate either of these. Under every form of Church-Government, they appear to be *anomalies;* since, in theory, every cure of souls may be supposed to imply an exclusively personal attendance on the charge. That such anomalies, however, are unavoidable under the existing circumstances of our own Establishment, can hardly be disputed by any considerate person. So long as there is a large proportion of Benefices inadequate, singly, to the decent maintenance of their respective Incumbents; pluralities must, to a certain extent, be allowed, or, (which is equally objectionable in a theoretical point of view,) the Incumbent of one insufficient Benefice must be permitted to hold with it some stipendiary Curacy of another parish. But the evil itself is, perhaps, of less practical magnitude than is commonly imagined. It affords occasion to the employment of many valuable auxiliaries to the Church, among the unbeneficed Clergy; whose services must otherwise be in much less request, and whose admission into the Church might, under other circumstances, be of very diffi

cult attainment. Nor are the cases of *entire* non-residence so frequent as our accusers would induce the public to believe. Few, comparatively, of the beneficed Clergy are altogether absent from their cures; scarcely any, perhaps, from insufficient causes. Few also of the absentees are not in some *other* respect professionally active and useful; occupied as Schoolmasters, Tutors, Chaplains, or in other situations most suitably filled by the clerical profession. It were surely harsh to impute to *such* Incumbents culpable non-residence; especially if, as is most frequently the case, they devote some portion of the year to a personal visitation of their spiritual cures, and make due provision that the most important interests of their flocks be not neglected. Others, again, who hold two Benefices with cure of souls, divide their time, as nearly as circumstances will permit, between both; and, with the help of efficient Curates, are virtually discharging the duties of both, though, in the rigid acceptation of the law, not resident upon either. Such cases as these, though manifestly tending to diminish the evil complained of, appear to be either little known, or little regarded, by those who look to the letter, rather than to the spirit of legal enactments, and who shew

a disposition to suppress whatever might blunt the edge of their sarcasms and invectives.

That these are nevertheless fit subjects for jealous investigation, with a view to prevent their abuses, to lessen their frequency, and, if possible, eventually to effect their entire removal, I am far from presuming to question. It is therefore with much satisfaction that I advert to another Bill now under the consideration of Parliament, introduced also by our present Primate, which has for its object to place the tenure of Pluralities under such modifications and restrictions, as may obviate many of the objections now alleged against them, and tend to remove the unworthy suspicions, too often entertained on very insufficient proof, of the covetous disposition of the Clergy. It were premature, however, to enter into a detail of the provisions, either of this Bill, or of that relating to the augmentation of small Livings; neither of them having yet passed into a Law. I mention them chiefly with the intent to shew that the Heads of the Church are not, as their opponents would have you believe, indifferent to any reasonable ground of dissatisfaction, or to any real and practicable improvement. To *such* reform, I venture to

assert, the Church, as represented by its accredited guardians and governors, feels no antipathy; nor would shrink from any fair and impartial inquiry into its actual state. It is desirous only, that its motives and its measures should be candidly interpreted; that its condition should be thoroughly understood; that its *spiritual* constitution as a Divine ordinance, together with its *temporal* pretensions, as invested by the State with long-established and well-founded rights and privileges, should be preserved inviolate; that no rash hand should be allowed to endanger the fabric itself, in attempting Utopian schemes for its reconstruction; but that every precaution be adopted to uphold it as the bulwark of pure Religion, and the moral safeguard of the community, to all succeeding generations.

I cannot, however, dismiss this part of the subject, without adverting to an invidious distinction, frequently made, between what are called, in modern phrase, the *operative* or *working* Clergy, and those who, as it is insinuated, enjoy the largest emoluments of the Church, without rendering any return of actual service.

Whatever may have been the case in times of less scrutinizing observation, no man who

casts an unprejudiced eye over the Church as it now presents itself to view, can fail to observe numerous and striking instances of the best-directed zeal and energy in all ranks and degrees of the Clergy, however exempted by station and circumstances from the necessity of toiling for their support. Never, perhaps, was there a time, when pastoral duties were more unremittingly discharged by the wealthiest beneficiaries; or when personal attention was more exemplarily bestowed upon the spiritual and temporal exigencies of their flocks. Never also, I believe, were there more who have distinguished themselves by literary attainments and highly-cultivated talents, as well as by the ordinary labours of the Ministry. In these respects, it is generally allowed, there has been, for many years past, a perceptible improvement in almost every department of the Church;—more activity, more distinguished ability, more solicitude to adorn the Clerical character, more earnest devotedness of heart and mind to the duties of the sacred calling, than in times when these essential qualities were less put to the test, or less rigorously demanded. In both our *Universities* a manifest advancement has progressively taken place in the studies and pursuits which lay the best foundation

of utility in the Clerical character; and the effects are almost every where apparent. Nor would I confine these observations to here and there a splendid instance of preeminent qualifications; but would be understood to apply them to the *prevailing* character of our Clergy at the present day, whatever individual exceptions may be found to counterbalance the representation.

3. A more vital point, however, remains next to be noticed, with reference to the bitter aspersions cast upon the conduct of almost the whole order of the Clergy, those especially of the higher and wealthier stations, as a body of men fit only to be held up to public contempt and execration. Of these, almost indiscriminately, it is said, that "they are distinguished neither for their "learning nor their morality;" that they are "negligent of public education;" "wallow-"ing in wealth, the produce of funds origin-"ally intended for the destitute and unfor-"tunate;" "manifesting little sympathy in "human wretchedness;" "oppressive on the "people;" "unjust towards the most deserv-"ing members of their own communion;" "hard-hearted towards the poor;" "consum-"ing the spoil of the industrious;" "without "sympathy with the misfortunes and vicissi-

"tudes of life;" "having no bowels even for "the indigent of their own class;"—and that the dignitaries and highly-beneficed Clergy are "at best but honourable lumber, who "have been turned over to spiritual pursuits "from inability to succeed in more arduous "professions."—These are some few of the very expressions of one of the most prominent of our antagonists; accompanied with the most acrimonious revilings of individuals, whether living or deceased, and however hitherto deemed of unimpeachable character.

To accusations so gross, so unqualified, few, perhaps, will venture to give countenance. Nor will I descend to vindicate our Order against calumnies like these. Rather would I ask, confidently and fearlessly, of the *Laity* around me, whether to *their own* Clergy, beneficed or unbeneficed, wealthy or indigent, of higher or of humbler station, they are prepared to apply these offensive representations? Will they affirm, that inability, immorality, negligence, oppression, hard-heartedness, neglect of the poor, unfeeling disregard of their wants, indifference to their welfare and improvement, are generally characteristic of those of our Order with whom they are themselves connected? Look, I would say, to your charitable Insti-

tutions, to your schools, your hospitals, your infirmaries, your various other benevolent undertakings, and see what proportion of their support is derived from *Clerical* aid and influence. Into every parish, where there is a Pastor endowed with means of doing good, institute this inquiry, and judge from the general result. Even then you will not perhaps have discovered the full sum of benefits conferred by many a faithful but unpretending servant of God, whose "right hand know-"eth not what his left hand doeth," though daily, in humble imitation of his heavenly Master, he "goeth about doing good." If then you cannot adopt the accusations of the slanderer respecting *your own* Clergy, surely you will not be so wanting in candour or justice as to admit them, upon the *ipse dixit* of a bold calumniator, against those with whom you are less conversant. Rather might you infer that he who indiscriminately censures *all*, is so much less entitled to credit when he censures *any;* and that, in the one case as in the other, the colouring of exaggeration or misrepresentation may have been employed to impose upon the credulous and unwary.

If I should seem, however, myself to overcharge the picture, in favour of this injured

body, be it remembered that I am presenting only a *general* contrast to *general* mistatements. In a class of men comprising more than twelve thousand individuals, it were vain to imagine that instances may not be found at variance with this statement; instances of neglect, of inefficiency, of cupidity, of unbecoming demeanour, of discreditable conduct, and even of criminal delinquency. God forbid, that we should gloss over these offences, or screen them from merited reprehension. They are, however, comparatively of rare occurrence; and still more rarely do they escape from that public opprobrium, which is among the severest chastisements of either violation or neglect of duty. Nor has the subject of Clerical delinquency been overlooked by those who are most deeply responsible for its correction or prevention. The Ecclesiastical Commission, appointed last year, for the consideration and revision of the existing law and practice in the spiritual Courts, has bestowed especial attention upon this branch of its inquiry; and measures are preparing for rendering the administration of justice in such cases both more summary and more efficient.

I have felt it necessary, my Reverend Brethren, on considering the position in which

we stand before the public at this momentous crisis, to speak freely on these several subjects, not only for the purpose of rebutting many ill-founded charges alleged against us, but also to afford an opportunity of no less freely offering my own opinion and advice, as to the line of conduct, which, under such circumstances, it behoves us to pursue.

The engines chiefly set at work, in these times, to effect any great changes, political or ecclesiastical, are *agitation* and *intimidation*. These having been already successfully applied to more than one great subject of popular excitement, the same are now put in motion to accelerate the downfall or the degradation of the Established Church: and the confidence of those who so apply them betrays itself in a tone of defiance, and even of anticipated triumph, as if the deed were already achieved. We can hardly, therefore, be lulled into a dangerous security. We see the peril actually before us; and have only to consider what may be the most available means of protection and defence.

The spirit of really *malignant* warfare is rarely to be softened by overtures of compromise or concession. These, for the most part, will be regarded as indications of weakness, timidity, or self-reproach, and will sti-

mulate only to further aggressions. Experience has too often proved this. No sooner has one sacrifice been made, than another has been called for. One security being yielded, the surrender of another, and another, is demanded; that the victim of conciliation may become so much an easier prey to the despoiler. It is indeed hard measure, which is dealt out to us in this respect. If we seem to be tenacious of what has had the sanction of time, and experience, and long-established rights and usages, the cry of bigotry, selfishness, and blind attachment to things no longer fit to be retained, is instantly raised. If, on the other hand, we shew a readiness to take some part with the crusaders against antiquity; so far, at least, as to institute modified and cautious measures of improvement, without putting the whole to hazard; then comes the taunt, *habes confitentem reum;* we are treated as acknowledging our delinquency, and only proposing imperfect attempts at renovation, for the purpose of inducing others to stop short of the consummation really wanted. To stem these different currents, no less firmness than discretion, no less caution than vigour, will be requisite. It will be necessary, calmly and steadily to survey the position we actually occupy;—in the lan-

guage of the Psalmist, to "walk about Sion, "and go round about her, and tell the towers "thereof, and mark well her bulwarks;"—in other words, to examine carefully what defects or imperfections really exist, what remedies may be safely supplied, what improvements may have become expedient, and, if expedient, practicable and secure. This, however, is to be done, not with reference merely to public opinion, or to the satisfying of querulous and ill-disposed opponents; but from a higher principle, that of rendering the Church more conducive to the spiritual interests of the State; more stable as well as more perfect; better adapted to the exigencies of the present day, yet still resting on its ancient basis, as that which alone can ensure its conservation to the latest ages.

That to investigations so conducted, and measures so devised, there is now no indisposition, on the part of those who must chiefly incur the responsibility of such proceedings, I have already intimated. But such proceedings are not to be accelerated at the bidding of rash and inconsiderate advisers; much less to be adapted to the views of men who would "reward us evil for good, and hatred "for our good-will." Other considerations must actuate those who would maintain "a

"conscience void of offence towards God and "towards men." The charge consigned to us is too precious to be bartered away for popularity, or to be yielded from mere deference to public opinion. With the confidence which conscious rectitude inspires, yet with such circumspection as befits the most resolute in such a cause, must every proposition be weighed, and every step be taken.

That the results, however, of conduct so regulated would give entire or immediate satisfaction to the public mind, excited as it has lately been by every possible incentive to discontent, it were too much to expect. Yet, if the inquietudes of the well-disposed can be allayed, or their confidence strengthened, substantial good will have been attained; and a return, in course of time, to a sounder and better feeling throughout the community may be anticipated. In the mean while, I would fain prevail with the Clergy, and those of our lay-brethren who feel a common interest with us in the preservation of our most valued institutions, not to suffer their zeal and solicitude on the one hand, or their mistrust and misgivings on the other, to induce them unnecessarily to increase the agitation already too prevalent. However well-

intentioned, and however valuable, may be the suggestions occasionally offered by those who press forward either in our defence, or for our improvement; more may sometimes be lost by affording occasion for continued warfare, than gained in any accession to our real strength. Too eager a spirit of conflict may also lead to rash encounters, embarrassing, rather than advantageous, to the cause it is intended to uphold.

Enough, however, there is, in such times as these, to occupy the thoughts and call forth the exertions of every one among us, whatever be his post or station. To counteract the effect of those pernicious stimulants, by which the whole community has been wrought up to a state of maddening irritation;—stimulants, administered by atheists, by revolutionists, by the thoughtless or desperate of every description;—is, at this moment, among the first duties of the vigilant Pastor. Fatal must be the consequences, if the monstrous fiends of blasphemy and disorganization now "going about seeking whom they may de-"vour," and stalking openly through the land with menace and defiance, be suffered to take undisturbed possession of our peasants and artificers, or of those on whom they immediately depend for their support.

To you, my Reverend Brethren, belongs the awful charge of endeavouring to dislodge from their haunts these pests of civilized society. It is for you, not only from the pulpit, but in your daily and hourly discharge of pastoral duties, to be watchful in interposing a shield against these dangers. To be "in-"stant in season and out of season," in imbuing the minds of your flocks with those principles of sacred truth which afford the only sure preservative against the subtle poison of infidelity, or the envenomed darts of sophistry and falsehood;—to watch as those who "must give account" of the souls committed to their charge;—to restrain, if possible, their misplaced ardour, in following every visionary that would entice them to disorder and confusion, by vain hopes and ideal speculations of a state of things, never to be realized, or, if realized, at the cost of every thing that ought to be most dear and sacred;—to enable the inconsiderate, the deluded, the feeble-minded, thus to escape the snares which beset their path;—these are the duties to which we are now indispensably called. By the prudent and strenuous discharge of them we shall better approve ourselves faithful servants of our Lord, than by encouraging the fantastic theories which are

leading our people, they know not whither, to "seek," as saith the Prophet, "that which "shall not satisfy their souls, because it is "the stumblingblock of their iniquity."

That in a Christian country like this, and in so advanced a stage of mental cultivation as is the boast of the present day, it should be needful to press these admonitions, is indeed grievous. And if we inquire how it has become needful, the answer is but too obvious. The main root of the evil lies in a want of sound, sober, and practical *religious* feeling, operating steadily throughout the community, and influencing the conduct in all the various departments of social life. The want of this is discernible in attempts to carry on the work of *popular education* without taking *Religion* for its basis; in the systematic and avowed separation of *civil* and *political* from *Christian* obligations; in the disposition to consider all truths, on whatever *sacred authority* they may rest, as matters of mere *human opinion;* and in a persuasion, that the whole concern of government, of legislation, and of social order, may be conducted as if there were no MORAL RULER OF THE UNIVERSE controlling the destinies of men or of nations; no other responsibilities than those which subsist between man

and man, unamenable to any higher tribunal. So long as these pernicious sentiments obtain currency among us, (and who will say that they do not fearfully prevail in every rank and every station?) it is impossible for any believer in a righteous Providence not to look on such a state of things with unwonted misgivings. Need I add, then, my Reverend Brethren, how seasonable, in its application to ourselves, is the Apostle's affectionate advice to his beloved Titus, "In all things "shewing thyself a pattern of good works; "in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, "sincerity, sound speech that cannot be con-"demned; that he that is of the contrary "part may be ashamed, having no evil thing "to say of you." On this indeed must our best hopes be stayed. Nor will I allow myself, under whatever discouragements, to regard the aspect of our affairs with despondency or dismay, so long as the Church is true to itself, and its ministers faithful to their charge. That the Protestant Church of England is a genuine branch of that holy Catholic Church, of which it is promised that "the "gates of hell shall not prevail against it," none of *us*, I trust, can hesitate to believe. Yet the pledge, with reference to any particular branch of the Church, is, like every

other Divine promise, *conditional* as to its fulfilment. A corrupt or careless Clergy, an unfaithful or unthankful people, general neglect of public worship, desecrated sabbaths, daring impieties, indifference to the truth, encouragement to superstitious vanities, or to doctrines subversive of the fundamental truths of Christianity; these, or any of these, when they become general, and especially when they infect those in high stations of authority, whose duty it is to control and to correct them; may provoke the Almighty to withdraw his protecting hand, and to say, as to his rebellious people of old, "Shall I not "visit for these things, and shall not my soul "be avenged on such a nation as this?"—Yet let us cherish the hope, that the labours and virtues, the exhortations and admonitions, the prayers and intercessions of pastors not lukewarm in the faith, and of multitudes of their fellow-Christians, who have not yet cast off their allegiance to the Most High, may prevail, to avert these evils from our favoured land. Many have been heretofore the perils it has encountered, many the deliverances it has experienced; and until that leaven of Irreligion—the Irreligion which cares not for God, neither is God "in all its thoughts"—shall have spread still

wider and deeper throughout the mass of our population, let us not be faint-hearted, nor of "doubtful mind." "Greater is he that is in "US, than he that is in the *world.*" So said our blessed Saviour, for the confirmation and assurance of his disciples, when every prospect of tribulation was set before them. And so will every true soldier and servant of Christ be ready to say, when the storm most vehemently beats around him.

But, whatever may be the inscrutable purpose of Divine Providence, respecting the temporal issue of these events, be it remembered, there is still one assurance which cannot be taken away from us, and which will more than compensate all our anxieties and all our labours. It is that Hope, which is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and stead-"fast;" the hope, or rather the confidence, that to ourselves, at least, the labour shall not be in vain;—that while we endeavour, through God's grace, to promote HIS honour and glory, to spread the knowledge of HIS truth, to hold fast by HIS promises, to fulfil HIS will, to "turn many to righteousness," and thus to advance HIS kingdom here on earth;—we are laying up for ourselves, through the all-prevailing merits and intercession of our Redeemer, an inheritance that

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